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The New Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion: The Limits and Divisions of Europe

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A vast swathe of Europe containing hundreds of millions of inhabitants is becoming increasingly unified. Since the end of the Cold War and the associated east-west partition of Europe, most European states have been coming together within *a single over-arching framework of institutions, governance, market forces and law* – primarily under the aegis of the European Union (EU) and its Member States, but backed up by supporting moves in the same general direction under the auspices of NATO, the Council of Europe and the OSCE (the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe). Most European states are either already members of the EU or aspirants to membership. Ten formerly Communist European states plus Cyprus, Turkey and Malta are negotiating potential terms of entry and are busily incorporating about eighty thousand pages of EU *acquis communautaire* into their 'national' legal systems, thereby subscribing to European Union's steadily deepening and widening supranational legal order. One of these candidates, Turkey, is already in a customs union with the EU. The other twelve are closely associated with it through 'Europe Agreements'. Norway, as a member of the European Economic Area, is a full participant in the Single Market and has thus accepted the supremacy and direct effect of European

Community law,[1] even though it has for the time being chosen to forego full membership of the EU and hence representation in the bodies which determine the rules which govern the Single Market and the specific content of EC law. Even Switzerland, which has 'made a career out of being different', has felt obliged to bring more and more of its laws into conformity with those of the EC.

Besides the current thirteen official candidates, there are many other countries that are expected to seek EU membership in the fullness of time: Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro (whether together or separately), Bosnia-Hercegovina, Macedonia, Albania and, perhaps with less certainty, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and even Russia.

Now that Croatia and Serbia are for the most part mutually disentangled and have shed the vicious authoritarian-nationalist regimes established by Franjo Tudjman and Slobodan Milosevic, respectively, they could quickly bounce back and (re)join the advance guard of central and east European integration into the European Union, perhaps not far behind Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and the Baltic States. Having had quite extensive and intimate dealings and contacts with the European Community countries from the 1960s to the early 1990s, Croatian and Serb entrepreneurs and intelligenti are still much more familiar with the ways of the West and global capitalism than are their Albanian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Moldovan, Georgian, Ukrainian and Belarussian counterparts. This should allow them to revive quite quickly

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[1] Although the European Community became the 'first pillar' of the European Union in 1993 and is therefore generally referred as the European Union, its supranational legal order and the EC Court of Justice which oversees it still pertain to the European Community. It is therefore more appropriate to refer to 'EC law' than to 'EU law'.

some of the networks into Western markets and public spheres which they had established by the 1970s and 1980s, if technology and human rather than physical capital are still the keys to economic and cultural dynamism. If the South Slavs and the Kosovars managed to surmount by the 1960s the legacies of the terrible fratricide and destruction that took place in their lands during the 1940s, it ought to be possible for them to overcome over the coming decade the (considerably smaller) fratricide and destruction that occurred in former Yugoslavia during the 1990s. What has been done before, and against far more unfavourable odds than pertain today, can surely be done again, however improbable that might appear to those little acquainted with the region and its remarkable powers of healing, cultural bridge-building, and recuperation.

The issue of whether Eastern Orthodox and/or Muslim countries such as Montenegro, Bosnia-Hercegovina, Macedonia, Albania, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia and Azerbaijan can be regarded as 'sufficiently European' to be eligible for membership of the EU will be addressed later in this paper. The Armenians consider themselves to be European by virtue of their 'national' religion, Gregorian Christianity, which they argue makes Armenia Europe's oldest 'Christian people'. In view of its vast territorial extent, Russia is sometimes considered too big to be assimilable into the EU, but it can be countered that in terms of GDP (which is perhaps what really 'counts' nowadays) Russia is now no bigger than the Netherlands. Its population, which has been shrinking as a result of the combination of very poor living standards and economic prospects and high levels of social acceptance of abortion on demand, is not vastly greater than that of unified Germany and ought not *per se* to constitute grounds for permanent exclusion from the EU.

The possibility that countries such as Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Israel might eventually become members of the EU should also be taken seriously. After all, EU trade with the so-called 'Euro-Med Partners' is somewhat larger than EU trade with east-central and south-eastern Europe. The EU economies are likely to become increasingly dependent on Maghrebi oil and natural gas deposits and the network of gas pipelines, which directly connects the Maghreb to Spain, Portugal, Italy and France, while the rapidly rising populations of the Euro-Med Partners are likely to provide expanding markets for EU exports. Most of the external economic relations of these states are with the EU rather than either with each other or with their (actually quite distant) African and Middle Eastern 'neighbours'. Much the same is true of the external links and orientations of their ruling elites. The Sahara desert, though it is sometimes compared to a sea, has been much more of a barrier to North-South interaction and inter-cultural communication than the Mediterranean Sea, which for around three thousand years has done much to bring together, cross-fertilise and mutually enrich the various peoples settled around its shores. The Francophone elites of the Maghreb states have been deeply affected by centuries of interaction with Spain and (more recently) France. Their *de facto* integration into Europe is already so high that it ought merely to be a matter of time before this is converted into matching levels of *de jure* integration.

Notwithstanding the old jibes (especially from leftist critics) that the European Communities were and would remain an exclusively Western 'rich man's club', it is now more widely accepted that the 'founding fathers' of the European Communities never intended their brainchild to remain exclusively *western* European. Written evidence to back up this view is surprisingly scarce. Yet François Duchêne, who was an associate of Jean Monnet from 1953 to 1963 and was

thus in a strong position to become personally acquainted with a number of the 'founding fathers', has assured us both personally and in his publications that this really was the case. "Monnet never thought of the Community as confined to the original Six. 'Our Community', he told the Economic Affairs Committee of the Council of Europe Assembly on 28 March, 1958, 'is neither a little Europe nor a closed Community.' This was implicit in his treating European union as the only solution for German unity. This could hardly have taken place without changes affecting the whole of central Europe – which has proved to be the case." (Duchêne 1994: 379) Heinrich von Brentano, who was West Germany's foreign minister from 1955 to 1961, spoke thus to the Congress of European Federalists on 15 January 1959:

> As far as the member countries are concerned I should like to make it very clear that just as the European economic communities we have created are not intended to be restrictive, nor would a European political community be. It would be open to any European country prepared to accept the necessary political conditions in the interests of all. (Brentano 1964: 161)

He was more explicit in Aachen on 15 May 1958:

> More than half of Europeans are still living outside the territory in which we have established our European institutions – some of them because for various reasons they have not yet been able to make up their minds to join us: the others because they are prevented against their will from joining us... The name Europe will have its full, proud sound only when all those who feel that they belong with us are able to work together with us in a society based on freedom, peace and security. (Brentano 1964: 200)

Interestingly, Winston Churchill's speech at Fulton Missouri in 1946, which famously spoke of an 'iron curtain' descending across Europe, also argued that "the safety of the world requires a new unity in Europe, from which no nation should be permanently outcast" (quoted by Wolff 1994: 2). The fact that Churchill saw Britain only as an outside sponsor (not an integral member) of the envisaged European union is beside the point. The important point was that he opposed the restriction of participation to the select few.

However, statements of this sort beg important questions concerning *the geographical and cultural limits of the 'Europe' that is to be unified*, as well as *the basis and the criteria on which this 'Europe' is to be conceived*. EU membership is officially meant to be open to any 'European country', but in this context what is 'Europe' and who should be considered 'European'? It is sometimes assumed, particularly by people with little or no understanding of the history and geography of Europe's eastern and southern flanks, that the geographical and cultural limits and criteria of Europe are clear-cut and self-evident. However, the exact opposite is the case. Moreover, the ways in which these issues have been handled have been detrimental to the long-term interests of states such as Turkey, Albania and Bosnia, as well as the Maghreb and most Eastern Orthodox countries.

Over the last decade or more there have been moves in western and central European Christian Democratic circles to revive the long discredited notion that 'Europe' roughly corresponds to Western Christendom (minus its extra-European offshoots). These moves are evidently meant to imply that: (i) the Turks and the Maghrebis are essentially 'non-European' and that perhaps the Albanians, the Kosovars and the Bosnian Muslims are not fully 'European' either, mainly (though not exclusively) on account of their predominantly Muslim faith;

(ii) these peoples ought therefore to be ineligible (or at best 'less eligible') for eventual membership of the European Union; and (iii) Eastern Orthodox countries have somewhat weaker claims to be considered 'European' than do Roman Catholic and Protestant ones and are consequently also 'less deserving' of EU membership.

These tendencies have been reinforced by the campaign unleashed by the Czech writer Milan Kundera (1984) asserting that predominantly Roman Catholic 'Central Europe' (including Poland, Hungary, former Czechoslovakia, Slovenia and Croatia) has long been part of 'the West' and is therefore more 'European' than are predominantly Eastern Orthodox countries such as Russia, Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania. (The claims for 'Central Europe' are critically assessed in Bideleux & Jeffries 1998: 8-15 and Bideleux 2001b: 27, 30, 35.) At its worst, this insistence on the distinctness, the greater cultural sophistication, the higher economic attainments and the supposed general superiority of Roman Catholic 'Central Europe' vis-à-vis its Eastern Orthodox and/or Muslim neighbours has been intended to foster conceptions of Europe which 'quarantine' or at least marginalise these countries and could well result in their exclusion from the EU and NATO. It is by no means as innocent or high-minded as is commonly assumed. Franjo Tudjman, then president of Croatia, argued thus in 1991:

> Croats belong to a different culture – a different civilization from the Serbs. Croats are part of Western Europe, part of the Mediterranean tradition. Long before Shakespeare and Molière, our writers were translated into European languages. The Serbs belong to the East. They are Eastern people, like the Turks and Albanians. They belong to the Byzantine culture… Despite similarities in language, we cannot be together. (Quoted in Cohen 1993: 208)

This sort of dichotomous thinking might well result in some so-called Central European countries, once they have been admitted to the European Union, joining the ranks of those who are very likely to oppose the admission of Eastern Orthodox and/or Muslim countries on the specious grounds that they are not (or are insufficiently) 'civilised' and 'European'. (In this perspective, Greece presumably got in under false pretences!) Fortunately, there are also some east-central European statesmen who understand that this sort of exclusion would be as unjust and arbitrary as the one their own countries suffered for forty-five years after the agreements concluded between the Allies in Moscow, Yalta and Potsdam in 1944-45.

Regrettably, intellectuals and politicians from the would-be excluded countries of south-eastern Europe sometimes respond to these vicious games of inclusion and exclusion by arguing that their particular country or group of countries has special European connections or characteristics that makes it an exception to the rule, in contrast to countries further south or east who are allegedly 'more Asiatic' or 'non- European' and thus 'less civilised' and 'less worthy' of eventual inclusion in the EU and/or NATO. The way out of this nefarious mindset and trap is to understand that no part of Europe is *innately* superior or inferior to other parts of Europe, or *essentially* more or less 'European' than other parts. Indeed, there are no generally acceptable criteria of 'Europeanness' on which such judgements could be based. History, culture and identity, and appeals to these supposed 'inheritances' from the past, have divided Europeans far more than they have ever been able to unite them. Even Serbia, which undoubtedly perpetrated Europe's worst crimes against humanity during the 1990s, has on a longer-term perspective been more sinned against than sinning. No nation is intrinsically 'better' or 'worse' than other nations. No part of Europe has a monopoly of virtue, nor are

Europe and virtue synonymous. Along with many finer achievements, Nazism, Fascism, the Inquisition, witch-burning, 'scientific' racism, the Atlantic slave trade and various weapons-of-mass-destruction have been also products of 'the European tradition' – and are actually more 'Western' than 'Eastern' in origin.

Nevertheless, the fact that so many western European organisations, politicians and pundits have rather naively taken the 'revival of Central Europe' at face value, as a straightforward and innocuous recovery of the region's 'true identity' (in place of the allegedly alien 'East European' one imposed on it by the east-west partition of Europe from the late 1940s to 1989), has undoubtedly strengthened public perceptions that Europe's Eastern Orthodox and Muslim countries are intrinsically less Westernised, less 'European' and less eligible for EU membership than are the (nominally) Catholic frontrunners – Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. Such stereotyping ignores (i) the extent to which Roman Catholicism in 'Central Europe' and elsewhere has often been tainted by absolutism, dogmatism, bigotry, xenophobia and antisemitism; (ii) the fact that Roman Catholicism has played much smaller roles in shaping identity in Hungary and the Czech Republic than it has done (sometimes for the worse) in Poland, Croatia and Slovakia; and (iii) the fact that well over ten million at least nominally Orthodox Christian Greeks and even more Muslims already reside in the European Union, mostly as fully integrated EU citizens with no other place to call 'home'. Narrow cultural definitions of Europe are thus internally as well as externally divisive.

Greece, the one Eastern Orthodox and south-east European country, which managed to avoid falling under Communist rule, is something of a special case. Thanks partly to being perceived as the 'cradle of democracy', partly to the geopolitical

interests of first Britain and later the USA in the eastern Mediterranean during the Cold War, and partly to the ties established between Konstantinos Karamanlis and President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing during the former's exile in Paris, Greece was treated as a 'Western' state and was accepted into the EC in 1981, in spite of its distinctly 'eastern' location and religious/cultural orientations. In addition, it is sometimes claimed that the German Federal Republic also backed Greek entry into the EC as a means of reducing the chances of Turkey eventually being admitted. Unfortunately, Greece's strident over-reaction to the emergence of a more assertive Albania and an independent 'Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' between 1991 and 1994 reinforced Western negative stereotypes of the Eastern Orthodox countries, and certainly did not help their cause. (These matters are more fully discussed in Bideleux 1996c and 1998.) Fortunately, under the premiership of Kostas Simitis since 1996, Greece has behaved in a far more conciliatory and far-sighted manner, mending fences, pouring oil on troubled waters, and playing important roles in the reconstruction and reorganisation of its neighbours' economies – with the result that it has begun to reap considerable direct and indirect economic rewards (outlined in Bideleux 1999a: 226-27).

The influence of crude cultural stereotyping has been further increased by Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilisations' thesis. This postulated that the Cold War stand-off between communism and capitalism is being replaced by a similar mutual incompatibility or antagonism between 'the West' (in which he includes Roman Catholic Europe and its Protestant offshoots in north-western Europe, North America and Australasia) and the 'non-Western civilisations', which he lists as 'Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and possibly African':

> The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future… As the ideological division of Europe has disappeared, the cultural division of Europe between Western Christianity, on the one hand, and Orthodox Christianity and Islam, on the other, has re-emerged. The most significant dividing line in Europe… may well be the eastern boundary of Western Christianity in the year 1500 … The peoples to the east and south of this line are Orthodox or Muslim; they historically belonged to the Ottoman and Tsarist Empires and were only lightly touched by the shaping events in the rest of Europe; they are generally less advanced economically; they seem much less likely to develop stable democratic political systems… As the events in Yugoslavia show, it is not only a line of difference; it is also at times a line of bloody conflict. Conflict along the fault line between Western and Islamic civilizations has been going on for 1,300 years… The central axis of world politics in the future is likely to be… the conflict between 'the West and the rest'… Non-Western civilizations have attempted to become modern without becoming Western… This will require the West to maintain the economic and military power necessary to protect its interests in relation to these civilizations. (Huntington 1993: 22, 25, 29-31, 48-49)

Some readings of this thesis suggest that Western/Latin Europe should press ahead with its own internal unification, rearm itself, and 'pull up the drawbridges' of the resultant 'fortress Europe', so as to prevent it from being either corrupted or ransacked by the 'less civilised barbarians' gathered beyond its southern and eastern perimeter fences. Such readings ignore the fact that the Eastern Orthodox countries have produced nothing as lethal or barbaric as the Nazi and the Croatian-Catholic Ustasa regimes, which arose in parts of what Huntingdon and Kundera regard as 'the West', perpetrated the worst crimes against humanity that the world has ever

witnessed, and included millions of eastern Orthodox Christians among their victims.

The current widely-held negative or xenophobic stereotypes of Eastern Orthodox and Muslim populations and states can only increase the likelihood of a mutually damaging long-term exclusion of countries such as Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and predominantly Muslim Albania and Kosovo from the EU. This exclusion damages the European Union (i) by perpetuating major zones of instability close to the heart of Europe; (ii) by sapping confidence in Europe's capacity to 'put its own house in order' and manage its own affairs without constant recourse to overbearing or hegemonic American intervention; (iii) by fostering a deeply corrosive public cynicism towards proclaimed European ideals (most notably during the Bosnian and Kosovo conflicts); and (iv) by impeding overland transportation and trade between the main torso of the EU and Greece and the Near East. There is a gaping hole in the map of the EU. Conversely, south-eastern Europe (including Greece) is damaged by the resultant instability, heightened uncertainty, increased risk premia, higher interest rates, reduced domestic and foreign investment, curtailed economic growth and constraints on public service provision.

Regrettably, it is still widely assumed that, except for Greece (which is already a member) and Slovenia (which is relatively orderly, disciplined, well-governed and prosperous country), other south-east European countries will and should only be considered for possible entry into the European Union *after* they have 'sorted out their problems' – *not before*. However, this attitude reflects a dangerously misconceived way of looking at their plight and of thinking about how it could be remedied. It is highly unlikely that their economic problems, the anxieties of their ethnic and religious minorities, their political fragilities, their security anxieties, and their 'law and order and civil rights

deficits' can be substantially alleviated or overcome within narrowly 'national' frameworks. Durable resolutions of their problems will probably only be attainable within the broader, stronger, more commodious, more secure, more law-governed, more civil and more stable framework that membership of the EU and its supranational legal order can provide. Excluding these countries from the EU 'until they have sorted out their problems' will only cause their problems to fester and periodically erupt, to the detriment not only of their own populations (who have already suffered far more than was 'necessary') but also of Europe as a whole. Only the EU has the capacity to break the vicious circles and transcend the limited horizons within which these countries are currently trapped. *They must therefore be allowed to enter the EU before very long in order to alter fundamentally the frameworks within which their problems are tackled and thus to deal with the root causes rather than merely the outward symptoms or consequences of those problems.* Significantly Carl Bildt, the former Swedish prime minister and current special envoy to the Balkans of the UN Secretary-General, has argued that

> the anchoring of the complex political arrangements of the [Balkan] region within a wider European framework will give those countries a credibility that will pave the way for stability. (Bildt 2001: 156)

The gradual incorporation of these countries into the institutional, legal and policy frameworks of the European Union could generate increased levels of certainty, stability, economic discipline, commercial activity and investment, help secure the rule of law and help reduce the rule of gangsters and thugs, to degrees that most south-east European states for the moment find difficult to achieve on their own. In the

absence of gradual incorporation into the EU framework, Bildt suggests, the peace in Bosnia could amount to no more than "the continuation of war by other means", and "the political conflicts will continue for ever" (ibid., pp. 152-53).

For these and other reasons, it is crucial to resist and denounce blinkered, exclusionary and 'Western supremacist' ideas and policies, which not only have damagingly divisive, alienating and destabilising effects on Europe's vulnerable and volatile eastern and southern flanks, but will also exacerbate the already mounting tensions within the increasingly multi-racial societies of north-western and west-central Europe. The EU contains roughly 15 million residents who do not have EU citizenship (Schmitter 2000: 39), and about 50 million residents who are members of linguistic minorities within the EU states which they currently inhabit (Altermatt 2001). It would therefore be much more advantageous to foster conceptions and geographical definitions of Europe which are as inclusive as possible, both for the sake of internal harmony and maximum identification with Europe and for the promotion of stable and harmonious relations with Europe's 'near abroad'. This is partly a pragmatic consideration, involving (among other things) a prudent acknowledgement of the importance (for better or worse) of the ways in which identities are shaped and perceived in setting the terms on which people relate to and deal with one another. More fundamentally, it is also a recognition of the elements of contingency and indeterminacy in matters of identity. Europe is (and must remain) 'a house with many rooms'. Therefore, whether any particular country is to be considered 'European' and a plausible candidate for membership of the European Union ought not to be determined on the basis of specious geographical and essentialist criteria of 'Europeanness'.

It is futile even to try to uphold either clear-cut geographical definitions or 'essentialist' cultural conceptions of Europe. Europe has never been a fixed geographical area with permanent and generally accepted boundaries (Bideleux 2001: 36-38). From the time of Herodotus (c. 484 – c. 420 BC) at least until the sack of Constantinople in 1204, the main focus of the prevailing elite conceptions of 'Europe' – on the rare occasions that this term was used at all – was on the area now slightly disparagingly referred to as 'the Balkans', whereas the countries which now think of themselves as constituting the 'core' of Europe were then little more than 'the barbarian West'. In other words, the situation was precisely the reverse of the present-day dichotomy, in which many citizens of western and central Europe seem to regard the inhabitants of south-eastern Europe as alien and inferior species much given to killing one another. The latter view conveniently overlooks the fact that western and central Europeans have had their own 'wars of religion' and genocidal tendencies, the latter until quite recently. Although 'Europe' eventually came to define itself in contradistinction to 'the Orient', the roots of the Christianity and of the ancient Greek philosophy which most Europeans have come to regard as central planks of their ancestral cultural heritage are arguably no less 'Oriental' than those of the Islam against which Europe defined itself for several centuries. In any case, Islam was born and first disseminated in extensively Hellenised and Christianised milieux. The Ottoman Empire, whose main power-base was for a century or two more 'Balkan' and 'European' than 'Anatolian' and 'Oriental', served for a while as 'Europe's defining other', and yet it later came to be seen as 'the sick man of Europe' – i.e., as part of 'Europe' (Bideleux & Jeffries 1998, pp. 64, 68-73, 82-83, 85). Likewise, the origins of the Magyar and Bulgar tribes that settled in what were to become Hungary and Bulgaria were clearly 'Asiatic',

yet this did not seriously inhibit their subsequent assimilation of and into 'European' civilisation. Members of the seventeenth-century Polish nobility prided themselves on a spuriously Asiatic 'Sarmatian' ancestry, in an attempt to reinforce their claims to a supposedly innate or racial superiority over their predominantly Slavic serfs, at roughly the same time as members of the Hungarian nobility reasserted and began to pride themselves on their more plausibly 'Asiatic' Magyar ancestry. (Various European doctrines of racial superiority originated as attempts to substantiate such claims to class – rather than national – superiority.) For a time both these nobilities adopted 'pseudo-Oriental' modes of dress, only to reassert their 'Europeanness' when it suited them in later generations. (One should never underestimate the role of calculated opportunism involved in changing patterns of cultural self-identification!) Most tellingly of all, the debates on whether Russia is 'European' or 'Asiatic' or a blend of the two – and as to where on the map of Eurasia 'European Russia' gives way to 'Asiatic Russia' – are ultimately unresolvable because they rest upon a false dichotomy between 'Europe' and 'Asia'. Culturally as well as geographically, there exists no hard and fast way of distinguishing what is 'European' from what is 'Asian', or where Europe ends and Asia begins. To my mind, the soundest perspectives on Europe are those that treat it as a large promontory and cultural offshoot of Asia, analogous to 'the Indian subcontinent'.

Europe cannot be defined and has never been characterised by the predominance of a single culture, whether religious, linguistic, artistic, musical or otherwise. Europe's history and cultures divide as well as unite Europeans. Europe has always comprised a rich tapestry of cultures – including not just a profusion of languages and literatures, but a great variety of different faiths (even if most of them are variants of Christianity)

and very varied scientific, artistic and musical traditions, within individual states as well as across Europe as a whole. Indeed, *a civilisation and/or (sub)continent which prides itself on its capacity to accommodate cultural diversity cannot at the same time be defined in terms of some sort of fixed 'essence' or cultural homogeneity*. That would be not so much a paradox as a contradiction in terms. Moreover, the specific content of Europe's highly variegated cultural mix has changed considerably over time. Not surprisingly, therefore, Europe also prides itself on its *capacity continually to reinvent itself*, in contrast to the presumed (but much exaggerated) *long-term stasis* of other civilisations and continents. Therefore, it should not even be contended that Europe represents a particular idea and/or set of values, norms and practices, traceable from ancient Greece and Rome or Carolingian Western Christendom or the Renaissance or the 1648 Peace of Westphalia or the Enlightenment, down to the present day. It would be more accurate to say that Europe has been identified with a long succession of contending ideas and competing values, norms and practices, most recently those associated with a distinctive states system and legal order (discussed further in Bideleux 2000 and 2001a). The paradox is that the values and principles in terms of which Europe has come to define itself (most of the time) since the Enlightenment are conceived as being universal and therefore as capable of being applied to other civilisations and continents as well.

At the same time, one must beware of falling into the easy Eurocentric trap of thinking that Europe's rich diversity and its strong capacity for self-renewal are *uniquely* European phenomena. (Fernández-Armesto 1995 and Ponting 2000 provide powerful counter-blasts to that sort of Eurocentrism). No civilisation worth its salt has ever been monocultural. All the creative and dynamic 'great civilisations', past and present,

have owed much of their greatness to the circumstance that they have been multi-ethnic and multicultural. This condition has generated the creative tensions, including those that Joseph Schumpeter referred to as 'creative destruction', which help to promote sustained self-renewal. Monolithic homogeneity and conformity is only a recipe for cultural, technological and economic stagnation. Therefore, labelling civilisations on the basis of a single cultural characteristic in each case (in the manner of Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilisations' thesis) would be laughable were it not so dangerously simplistic, encouraging politicians and publics to think that we must either fatalistically accept or else arm ourselves against supposedly ancient and insuperable antagonisms between different religions and cultures which have actually managed to rub along quite well together for centuries at a time.

'Europe' has always been a somewhat elastic and kaleidoscopic entity, which has latterly become roughly coterminous with the European product and labour markets and a broadly corresponding European states system and legal order. The 'Europeanness' of a country should therefore be judged, not in accordance with 'fixed' cultural or geographical criteria, but by an empirical assessment of the extent to which it has actually been participating in, contributing to, and abiding by the currently prevailing rules, norms and practices of the continually metamorphosing civilisation, states system and 'big market' which go by the name of Europe. Likewise, eligibility for formal membership of the European Union should be decided primarily on the basis of an applicant's actual willingness and capacity to contribute to the EU's success and to comply with its membership rules, norms and obligations, rather than on the basis of more arbitrary cultural and/or geographical preconceptions and prejudices. Any country, which is meeting or demonstrably willing and able to meet the

above criteria, should be considered 'European' and eligible for membership of the EU. Any country, which refuses or is unable to meet these criteria simply debars or excludes itself from membership until such time as it is prepared to make the necessary changes. Conceived in this way, it should be feasible for countries such as Morocco, Algeria and Turkey eventually to become as much a part of Europe as, say, France or Germany; and one could not rule out in principle the possibility that they could eventually become more integrated into and convergent with the main torso of Europe than some of the countries which more obviously conform to the currently prevailing cultural and geographical stereotypes of 'Europeanness'. Like the USA today and the Islamic lands in the medieval period, Europe is best understood as a cultural and technological melting-pot, an area of vigorous economic, political and cross-cultural interaction that continually renews and replenishes itself by sucking in products, people, ideas, inventions, technologies, doctrines, practices, skills and talents originating from all over the world and melding them together in increasingly sophisticated combinations.

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