

CONTEXT MATTERS

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The year 2014 marks ten years since the single largest expansion of the European Union and 57 years since the 1957 Treaty of Rome. If the EU were a human being, it would have, by now, lived out the greater part of her life. Also, a decade of membership in the European Union seems a long time if viewed in the context of a human's lifespan. However, human lifespan is hardly pertinent to measure the lifespan of institutional development. Realistically, the life of institutional development should be gauged by the lifespan of the tortoise. For example, the age of the U.S. Congress is 238 years or the equivalent of a mature tortoise. If one wanted to assume that the United Nations Security Council is an offspring of the Congress of Vienna (three out of the five permanent members were/are members of both institutions), then one can see that they have been there for a good 202 years. So, if we are to compare to the longevity of institutional development to the lifespan of a tortoise, as we should, then the European Union is practically a baby.

In the above context, it is better to evaluate the impact of the European Union, along with its short and long-term effect of the 2004 enlargement, by glancing at Europe over the span of 100 years. For example, one hundred years ago, Cyprus and Malta were British colonies. Hungary was part of the Dual Monarchy, while the other seven newcomers to the European Union had not political entities yet. Once all ten of them achieved independence, all of them, except for Malta, experienced invasion and occupation and fell victims to dictatorship and domestic turmoil. Cyprus was invaded by Turkey, while Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Slovenia by the Nazis. Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, along with Czechoslovakia and Hungary, were invaded by the Soviet Union. All of them, except Cyprus, joined the European Union with their territorial integrity relatively intact. If one assumes that the primary purpose of joining was to achieve security, they indeed seem to have attained a relatively high degree of it. In fact, Cyprus is the only one that is still experiencing the effects of invasion and is still under occupation. In this regard, she is the only European Union member to be in this position, and the only one out of the ten that is not a member of NATO, but is nonetheless

being occupied by one such member (Malta is also not a NATO member, but is also a state that did not experience invasion). To understand why Cyprus is in this unique and tragic situation, one must also look at the effect the EU had on the invader states.

The list of invading states include Germany, the Soviet Union, Turkey, and, yes, Hungary. Hungarian forces participated in the invasion of Yugoslavia in 1941 while Slovenia was part of it (till 1929, Yugoslavia's name was Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes). After independence from Soviet occupation, Hungary developed positive relations with Romania over the issue of the Hungarian minority there, and is now enjoying its EU membership and security benefits associated with such membership. Having been one of the two major perpetrators of invasion and occupation, Germany has become, along with France, the major actors of promoting institutional development in the European Union. Like Hungary it has reconciled with her past and transformed itself into a benevolent state. For both these states, the European Union had a positive reforming effect. The Soviet Union does not exist anymore, primarily due to its dead-end economic system whose lifespan should have been easily gauged by the average lifespan of a human rather than of a tortoise. Russia, which shed its Soviet shell, is currently dealing with some double personality complexities inherited by the deranged nationalities policies of the Soviet leadership dating all the way back to Lenin. Once she achieves a psychological balance within the next five to ten years (it will take that long to resolve the Ukrainian dilemma), Russia is bound to enter into a benevolent and engaging personality with Germany and the European Union. Economic considerations will dictate this for Russia. But then there is Turkey. One hundred years ago, Turkey, along with Germany and Hungary, was one of the Central Powers. During WWII turkey technically stayed neutral, a condition that clearly translated into the benefit of Nazi Germany. After the war, concerned about the invading posture of the Soviet Union, Turkey became a member of NATO. All along she also developed the notoriety of having extracted more money from the Soviet Union than any other non-Soviet bloc country, except Cuba. Then some 18 years after the Soviet Union invaded Hungary, 17 years after Germany signed the treaty of Rome, and only six years after the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia, Turkey invaded Cyprus illustrating clearly that NATO did not have a reforming effect on her. Turkey's record, like that of the Soviet Union, does

not give cause for optimism. The future however, does seem hopeful. Turkey was in the periphery of Europe one hundred years ago, and retained that status till recently. A substantial portion of the Turkish population is now connected to the German population through immigration. In fact, there are many Turkish citizens that are also European Union citizens. Albeit painfully slowly and excruciatingly reluctant, Turkey is slowly being reformed, and when the reformation process ends, Cyprus will be no more occupied.