

GREECE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

A Political / Institutional Balance Sheet

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This balance sheet finds the EU in the midst of yet another serious and prolonged crisis. Rejection of the Constitutional Treaty by France and the Netherlands in May-June 2004 meant that the long overdue reform of the working of its institutions is still pending with all the negative consequences associated with that. The situation currently seems so delicate that no easy way forward can be foreseen. Nevertheless a number of different scenarios have appeared by various actors although none seems to be gaining the necessary momentum to produce the necessary consensus. The so called “reflection period” seems to be de facto extended up to 2009, the year of the next elections for the European Parliament. Things have changed considerably since the last publication of the volume at hand. The EU has already 27 members and a number of countries in the Western Balkans are in a process of rapprochement with the EU. Although the further enlargement of the EU does not seem to be a popular choice, it also necessitates a further treaty reform given that the Treaty of Nice currently in force did not anticipate more than 27 members. Nevertheless, Greece is one of the eighteen member states that have already ratified the Constitutional Treaty.

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In attempting to present a balance sheet on the relations between a member state and the EEC, we usually have to come to terms with an immense amount of relevant information. Books, monographs and research theses have been and are being produced at an impressive rate throughout and outside the European Union. This holds equally true for the relations between Greece and the EEC.

Here we are concerned with the political / institutional affects of membership and in European policy terms with aspects of the domestic foundations of the Greek policies vis-à-vis Europe. In fact, we are concerned in this chapter with an outline of the main effects of EU membership upon the operation of the Greek political institutions.

A HISTORICAL OUTLINE

Greece was the first country to sign an Association Agreement with the EEC as early as 1961 (applied for in 1958, in force since 1962). The "Athens Agreement" was aiming at the accession of Greece into the EEC within 22 years. The Agreement was partly frozen for seven years (1967-1974), at the initiative of the Commission of the EEC, (nowadays the European Commission) as a reaction to the military regime that assumed power in Athens in 1967 (April, 21) and re-entered into force on the restoration of a liberal parliamentary regime in 1974. Almost immediately (as a result of the Cyprus imbroglio and of a deepening economic crisis that was beginning to show its teeth) the New Democracy Government then in power under K. Karamanlis, crowning its novel

political project of liberal bourgeois (Mavrogordatos 1984), applied for full membership to the EEC in early 1975. Greece joined the EEC, as its tenth member, in 1981.

The collapse of the military regime in 1974, the "Metapolitefsis", has had important consequences for the political system of the country. It is probably fair to suggest that this was not far short of a political revolution on a number of counts. The population became conscious of the virtues of Representative Parliamentary Government, secondly, in association with the former, the Greek Communist Party became legal after almost 30 years (since 1947). Thirdly, the anticommunist ideology, a pillar of the precoup state was driven ad absurdum, fourthly, in completion of the "liquidation of the past image" policy pursued by the Government the day the monarchy was brought to an end through the December 1974 free and fair referendum. Fifth, the composition and structure of the political personnel changed radically.

The issue of EEC membership was entangled in the general background of xenophobia that owes its existence to the history of the modern Greek state -that was revitalised and expanded in social terms in 1974- due to British and NATO inaction to prevent or reverse the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, their alleged action to prevent the Greek army from landing on the island and on top of the alleged role and support of the USA with regard to the military regime. For, a population accustomed to real or perceived threats to its national integrity throughout the years of its

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Signing the Treaty of Greece's Accession to the E.E.C. (1979)

existence as an independent state under International Law, would be easily drawn by arguments of the kind. Andreas Papandreou's PASOK skillfully managed to utilise upon this element and in the space of seven years managed to capture 48% of the vote and a handsome majority in Parliament in the 1981 elections (actually, PASOK in three consecutive elections in 1974, 1977 and in 1981 almost doubled its share of the vote each time!). The irony of history had brought to power a political party that was elected on a ticket to withdraw from the EEC, at the time that Greece was becoming a full member! Ironically enough, the government of the day which managed the accession of the country in the EEC, a fact which by now is regarded as the most significant post World War II improvement in the status of the country

in the international system, lost the elections held immediately after accession. Contemporary European history abounds with such ironies starting from the 1946 British General elections.

To be fair to the anti EEC forces, however, the EEC at the time represented no more than a mere customs union with a few common policies, hit by the consecutive energy crises of the '70s and betrothed in fierce debates internally over budgetary contributions. The EMS in 1979 was the more important institutional development of the period but this, to reinforce the point, was arranged outside the Treaty framework at the time. To be fair, there was no way for PASOK or any of the parties of the "Left", or anybody else for that matter that could have foreseen the dramatic systemic changes of the 1989 Eu-

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ropean *annus mirabilis* or those that began in the EEC a few years later with the introduction of the Single European Act (SEA) –1987– and the consecutive Treaty changes in the '90s. On top of that PASOK came to power with a clear social agenda as its top priority which was long overdue in Greece but not easily reconciled with the conditions of the European System of Cooperation - in spite of the existence of all sorts of non tariff barriers to trade not only between Greece and the rest of the EEC but also in intra-EEC trade. Mitterand's France and Papandreou's Greece were singled out in the literature as examples of the limitations of economic interdependence on autonomous policy making.

On top of that as Fatouros (1992) pointed out that the issue of the entry of the country into the EEC became part in the old cleavage between "westernizers" and "traditionalists". This cleavage draws its existence in the years before the independence of the modern Greek state in 1831. This cleavage refers to the age-old question as to whether Greece belongs to the "East" or to the "West". The "Westernizers" (modernizers) historically identified, *grosso modo*, with the rational inquiry and the political liberalism of the Continent, a sometimes cosmopolitan view of the world, whereas the "Easterners" (traditionalists) were represented chiefly by the Orthodox Church advocating the defense of the status quo, e.g. religion, tradition and social hierarchy. A clear indication that this cleavage is still active, reminiscent and echoing perhaps of the early, but still active, religious cleavages in Eu-

rope, was given by the recent controversy over religious identification in the Identity Cards between the state and the church which has tormented the country for almost fourteen months after the 2000 elections. On these grounds the challenge facing the country upon entry into the EEC in 1981 was as Valinakis (1994) pointed out, how to bridge the gap between its political, economic and cultural identity as a western European nation with its East European location and traditions. This rather schizophrenic situation probably is a good explanatory variable of much of the problems that the country faced inside the EEC/EU.

This, *inter alia*, may be due to the fact that the country joined the Community on political rather than economic grounds. Certainly, it seems, the charismatic authority and consummate statesmanship of K.Karamanlis, Prime Minister at the time, has been instrumental to the success of the Greek application, as much as it was a result of the influence of the Franco (D'Estaing) - German (Schmidt) entente in the EEC.

In Greek eyes, the new (as from 1974) situation in the neighborhood of the country necessitated additional structures of support in its international relations. In internal political terms the EEC was seen as (a) the additional support required for the protection of the new and fragile liberal Parliamentary regime, and (b) the political and economic context which would facilitate the economic development of the country. The strategy of the Government of the day was based on a theory of induced modernization,

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e.g. that the country as a whole would have to adjust to this new and much more competitive environment or else. In short, “Right” vs. “Left”, “East” vs. “West” (and possibly “Third World” vs. “East” and “West”), these cleavages (and their by-products) initially marked the development of the Greco-EEC relations.

The first PASOK EEC years (1981-1989) went through a number of phases. The impassioned anti-EEC stance of the Party during its opposition years was to a large extent responsible for a good part of the problems that the country faced inside the EEC. For, if anything this posture educated accordingly the grassroots and more importantly the cadre of the party, that is to say the very people that were responsible for the creation and implementation of Government policies both in Greece as well as in the EEC institutions. The second phase of the PASOK attitude was marked with the “memorandum to the EEC” of March 1982 whose main aim has been the increase in funding of the Greek economy by the EEC, and the change was completed with the support offered to the Single European Act (S.E.A.) probably the most important liberal project in the history of the EEC/EU.

The 1989 *annus mirabilis* in Europe and internal developments in Greece led to a significant change in PASOK’s attitude vis-à-vis the EEC. The collapse of the former Soviet block and the “Europa offenheit” policies of the former Warsaw Pact countries seeking rapprochement with all western dominated international institutions -from

NATO to the OECD- made the EEC a desirable reality. The anti-imperialist / anti-western attitude in PASOK tumbled down although resurfaces in times of crises such as the recent Yugoslav and Gulf ones, in a large chunk of the party and the society, a fact that the leadership of that party must take into account. This may be an explanatory factor of the reasons of the Greek insecurity feelings during the recent Balkan bewilderment over the collapse of the Yugoslav federation and its still pending issues. This dormant legacy of the past is still part of the “zero point energy” political culture of the country.

The 1989 - 1990 political crises with the formation of three consecutive ecumenical governments ended with PASOK loosing the 1990 elections after a decade in power and returning to opposition until the premature downfall of the New Democracy Government of the day. At the 1994 elections PASOK returned to power. In 1996 A. Papandreou, the founder of PASOK and Prime Minister of the country died, and K.Simitis was elected as party leader and consequently as the new P.M. The election of Simitis to the leadership of the party signified a radical change to the profile of PASOK. The “Allagi” (Change) slogan used during the Papandreou years acquired a strong modernizing dimension, which was exemplified by a number of institutional changes regarding Education (Metarithmisi) and the Local Authorities (Kapodistrias Program) as well as changes at the level of economic policy making. The Simitis Government helped to change the attitude of the country vis-à-vis Europe. The

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primary objective of the Government of the day evolved around the entry of the country in the Economic and Monetary Union and the satisfaction of the Maastricht criteria, the change of the “black sheep” image of the country in the EU.

The new Government of the country after the 2004 general elections under K.Karamanlis had the arduous task to organize the 2004 Olympic Games and conclude its many overdue constructions (roads, the Olympic Stadium etc.) which naturally became its top and only priority for the best part of that year.

The new Government actively pursued the conclusion of the entry negotiations in the EU of Bulgaria and Romania, continuing the policies of its predecessors and verifying the existence of a strategic consensus on European Affairs. For, the country is now bordering with other countries of the EU offering important developmental possibilities for some of its less developed regions in the north. On top of that these countries are of great economic significance given the important investments by 4,700 Greek companies and banks with total investments of over 14 billion Euros.

On the other Balkan fronts the situation appears to be more complicated as the Kosovo and Fyrom issues are in need of further discussions. Both issues are of obvious importance for the stability of the region although the recent renaming of the Petrovats airport to Alexander the Great!!! directly contravenes the 1995 interim

agreement between the two sides in the UN. Similarly the UN proposals on the future of this Serb region does not seem to acquire the agreement of both sides.

PARLIAMENT, STATE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The literature on the democratic deficit in the EU has blown out of proportion during recent years. This has been a structural problem of the EEC on account of the logic of the neofunctionalist Community Method and its legal guarantees that has helped to shape the integration process by affording roles, powers and capabilities to the European Institutions and especially the European Commission, in the policy making process. This ongoing debate though has helped to bring to a wider attention issues central to parliamentary democracies as those related to the legitimization of the policy processes, or those that are related with the very physiognomy of the European System of Cooperation and its future directions.

It is probably fair to suggest that the overall influence of the Parliament in foreign policy formulation is marginal. This is true in the case of the European Policy of Greece, which is regarded, technically at least, as part of the international relations of the country in spite of the occasional declarations to the contrary by various influential individuals inside or outside the main political parties. This attitude is gradually altered given the evolution of the EU system but it is fairly early to conclude on the implications or the extent of such a change. The most important function that the 1975

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The celebration for the 25 years of Greece as a member of the E.U.

and the 2000 constitutions recognise in the field of foreign policy for the Parliament is the ratification of international treaties, on the count provided for by the new art.36 para.2.

The position of the country in the European System of Cooperation is usually being discussed in the Parliament on the occasion of more general debates on “the state of the country” between party political leaders, or on the eve of major European Councils, a practice mostly used during more recent years due to the rapid developments in the EEC since the mid '80s.

The role of the Greek Parliament in the case of the incorporation of EEC legislation is minimal. Indeed Law 945/1979, by which the Accession Treaty was ratified, stipulates

that the final responsibility for the incorporation of the EEC legislation in the Greek Legal order rests with the Executive of the country on the basis of the general authorisation of art.43 Para 4 of the 1975 constitution, e.g. through Presidential Decrees. Earlier, from the period between 1975-1979, during this second phase of the Association years, the Parliament has been involved four times in legislation of relevance to the EEC. For example, once in the Community and in the space of nine years (1983-1993) only 31(!) laws were ratified by Parliament. This number includes also all the major pieces of EEC legislation such as the Accession Treaty, the S.E.A, and the Treaty on European Union.

Parliamentary committees for the scrutiny of Community Legislation

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(the likes for ex. the House of Lords Select Committee on European Integration) or for the closest possible involvement in EEC policy making of the Parliamentary institutions (Folketing) are known for quite some time in the EEC and their cases are well documented. The Greek Parliamentary committee on European Integration is a mixed committee consisting of 24 MPs (12) and MEPs (12) and one of the vice chairmen of the House as the chairman of the committee (Total 25). It was set up by a decision of the Chair of the House on the 13th of June 1990. Both MPs and MEPs are voting members and are chosen on the basis of the electoral strength of their parties at both the National and the European Parliaments although the electoral system is not the same in both instances.

Anastopoulos (1993), Makridimitris-Passas (1992) and Spanou (2001) discussed the problems that the Greek Public Administration faces within the EEC. Hellenocentrism, defensive attitudes, a narrow financial approach as well as inflexibility are some of its major shortcomings. As a result the credibility of the Administration in the EEC is seriously impeded. Passas (1993) points out that in organisational terms the main problem seems to lay in the poor coordination between the vertically organised units, the understaffing of those units and the wide mobility of personnel mainly through party political activity.

As a result of EEC membership the style of policymaking has become more open involving experts from other Departments/ Ministries as

well as independent experts. Ioakimides (2001) talks about the “de-externalisation of foreign policy ...in the sense that many ‘outsiders’ seek to influence foreign policy outcomes”.

Internally the responsibility for European issues was given to the Ministry of the National Economy and for most of the time to the SOE –The Council of Economic Advisers–, a unit of strategic importance within the Ministry of the National Economy, both of which at the time under Minister Arsenis (as was previously the case under Minister Manos and under the late Minister Genimatas, Minister Papantoniou and the current Minister Alogoskoufis) had almost absolute authority on issues of economic policy broadly conceived, following a politics/ economics dichotomy. Gradually though under the influence of certain “economism” in the perceptions of the implications of the Single European Act and of the Treaty on European Union, but also due to the poor comparative economic performance of the country, the Ministry of National Economy has acquired the best part of the responsibility for European Affairs. This process of power reallocation between the various Ministries became all the more obvious during the term of the previous Government (1996-2000) given the very difficult yet unprecedentedly successful effort to join the third stage of the EMU and satisfy the Maastricht criteria - a task considered at the time as mission impossible. Reduction of Public debt, reduction of the Public deficit, lowering of the interest rates and monetary and fiscal stability -

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macroeconomic stabilisation- on the basis of the 1993 and 1994 convergence programs -all these pushed the Ministry of National Economy at the centre of the game. Of course this has been a source of tension between the various Ministries, which is compounded by the fact that to all intents and purposes the EEC Council of Ministers is a “legal fiction”. More difficult problems arise out of the allocation to the various Ministries of funds from the Structural Funds -a sine qua non for the convergence and rationalisation of the Greek economy with interesting decentralizing implications for the political system as a whole- and the various financial instruments arising out of the 1988 restructuring of the Funds and the various reforms such as those included in the Commission’s Agenda 2000. Conflicts between the various Ministries are solved at a higher level, at the cabinet level (at KISIM) or even personally by the Prime Minister. It must be said, however, that in general the effectiveness of such bodies of collective responsibility as the cabinet (KISIM), is at best dubious.

Considerable efforts have been undertaken in more recent years to change the prevailing culture in the bureaucracy and check these of its aspects that are not considered friendly to the citizen. The creation of the Ombudsman in 1995 and the setting up of a number of Independent Authorities on the EU or European models dealing inter alia with the protection of civil rights helped to re-emphasise the obvious point that the citizen is at the centre of any political system and also helped the corroboration of political

democracy in Greece. Community funds are also used to modernise the public bureaucracy through the application of a vast number of programs introducing and extending the application of information technologies –e-administration– or improve the skills of civil servants such as for example the “Politeia” program. Transparency is slowly but steadily being introduced in the system but on the whole as Ioakimides (2001) argued these changes (and others as well) helped to rebalance state –society relations in favour of the latter. It should be mentioned, however, that in spite of the various EU initiatives on issues traditionally outside the political agenda, mobilisation and quantifiable public awareness have been rather low. Environmental movements, feminist movements etc. or any of those included in Ingelhart’s typologies, do not seem to be able to mobilise citizens at any impressive rate. On top of that political parties were quick to include such post–materialist issues in their manifestos precluding thus the development of such movements. Civil society is still in a state of development. Migration on the other hand has been a totally new issue to be dealt with in the political system. It is a direct result of the post -1989 developments and also touches upon the foreign policy of the country. Greece has been traditionally a labor exporting country where throughout the 20th century migration flows were recorded towards the more developed economies of the countries of western Europe, the USA and Australia while repatriation flows occurred from the prosperous Greek communities in Africa and the Asia minor⁴. Data show that the vast number of

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migrant workers originates from Balkan neighboring countries although there seems to be also migration flows similar to the rest of the EU.

Interest groups

The modern Greek state grew up in a hostile neighborhood whose continuous turbulence triggered a series of political crises internally. Thus the centralization of the political system was the inevitable result, with the Greek state in the role of modern Leviathan or a Colossus but with "feet of clay", as Mouzelis (1990) colorfully suggested. Traditional political parties with extensive networks of clientelistic relations, offering, inter alia, public sector enrollment, became the chief stabilization mechanism in support of the system.

On the EEC/EU issues PASEGES and the Government of the country, through a process of consultation, manage to adopt a unanimous stance in the Community arenas in most cases. This may also be explained with reference to the importance of the agricultural economy of the country. Indeed, agricultural contributes 17.4% of the gross value added in Greece and accounts for 31.3% of the value of total exports. Still 20% approx. of the total labor force is employed in the agricultural sector but the number is steadily declining. The existence of the CAP has been the chief parameter of successive Governments in their decision to associate, join and finally stay in the EEC, in spite of the comparatively poor support for the Mediterranean production under the CAP regulations. The defense of the national interest, therefore, requires unanimity at the EEC

level. On the other hand GSEE is one of the two peak unions (the other one is ADEDY representing public sector employees stricto sensu) and is member of the ETUC, the workers confederations umbrella organisation at the EEC level.

GSEE appears at the top of an organisational pyramid in which the unions of the private as well as the wider public sector (banks, common utilities organisations etc.) are represented. Today the picture is one of extreme apportionment as there are over 5000 first rank unions and 84 federations. A measure of the lack of political autonomy of the organisation may be given by the fact that in every instance until 1989 the leadership of the GSEE was of the same party political affiliation as the Government of the country. Nevertheless, at the national level the organisation has developed a network of linkages with the Ministry of Employment, especially so after the Amsterdam Treaty and the Lisbon European Council, although currently the country lacks a clear forum for the dialogue between the social partners. Through party political connections the GSEE remained calm for the time required for the country to join the Euro zone, but tension has grown once again due to the failed attempt by the Government to reform the social security system, an item which triggered a serious party and Governmental crisis and which resulted in the reformulation of the Government in October 2001.

The SEV (Federation of Greek Industries) is an active participant in UNICE and has developed close links with the EU institutions

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through its Bureau in Brussels. The SEV consists of mainly big industries (two out of three more profitable industries of the country) including those representing multinational capital. In contrast with the other two organisations referred to above, the SEV exhibits a higher degree of political autonomy which is probably better explained with reference to the importance of its political resources, e.g. its significance in economic terms. More recently the SEV, with the occasional hitches, acted as a powerful ally to the efforts to rationalise the public sector and the economy and attain the Maastricht criteria although tension between the two sides grew as a result of Government hesitation to deregulate further the economy.

Throughout the term of the previous and the present Government under Simitis, the quest of the adaptation of the society to the new European environment took a more concrete form. For it was not only the efforts of the country to join the third and final stage of the EMU but also a number of efforts internally to streamline the various sectors of the economy and the society to be able to adapt best to the new and more difficult environment. The initiative internally depended on the premise that at the present stage of development of the European System of Cooperation competition is not only about firms but extends to competition of systems, modes of organisation, and finally to roles and identities. Education and the system of local authorities were chosen as the first sectors to adapt. Both of these initiatives were not without problems

and revealed the limits of the adaptive capacity of the sectors concerned and perhaps of the society as a whole. Wider European initiatives such as the Sorbonne, the Bologna, and recently the Prague Declarations, coincided with internal reforms and triggered a wider debate internally. The “Ekdedefitiki Metarithmisi” of 1997-2000 was a vigorous effort -at considerable political cost- to modernize the educational system at all levels, focusing though at the secondary level (Lyceum). Party political considerations, traditional attitudes, financial considerations and opposition from interest groups (OLME - DOE) active in Education -teachers unions- in defense of the status quo stood well in the way. In spite of the above-mentioned difficulties the program was carried through. Serious opposition against Government initiatives to implement agreed European wide policies within the “Bologna Process” on Quality Assurance were also recorded. This was a major initiative -and long overdue- of the Karamanlis Government in power since 2004 with a handsome majority in Parliament. The new, as from 2004, Minister for National Education and Religious Affairs, Mrs Giannakou, was the next in line to introduce long overdue reforms to the laws governing the country’s tertiary education, e.g. Universities and Technological Universities. Constitutional reform and especially reform of art.16 of the Constitution to enable the private sector to be associated with tertiary education was the last piece in Governments drive to modernize the system. Again party political considera-

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tions and fierce opposition from left wing teachers unions and student organizations stand on the way. PASOK, nowadays the main opposition party went out of its way and abandoned the constitutional reform process unable to manage intraparty hostility especially on the reform of art.16 in spite of its leadership pledge to support Governments initiative.

On the other hand “Kapodistrias” -the name of the founder of the Modern Greek state- was given to the program to rationalize the system of local authorities. The picture of the system before the Kapodistrias plan was one of extreme fragmentation in that there existed 5,999 koinotites-anything with less than 10000 inhabitants (communes) –and 304 demoi– anything with more than 10,000 inhabitants. The plan aimed at the reduction in the overall numbers to rationalize the system and streamline expenditure, given that these bodies heavily depend on state funding for their survival. Although the program was carried through it is still in need of further action for its stabilization. In essence the plan helped to accommodate the EEC inspired decentralization process of the political system which has started off as early as 1984 when the country was divided into 13 regions for the purposes of the EEC’s regional policy. Although this has been for some time a mere administrative division -a nominal devolution- it was in 1994 that the first sub-government elections were held (prefecture councils) which added an interesting new dimension to the political system as a whole (Tsinisizelis 1996, Ioakimides 2001).

PUBLIC OPINION AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Data on the public opinion cover the period from 1974 to 2000. In some cases, the data used relate to shorter periods, as from 1981 (Greek entry in the EEC).

Generally speaking Greek public opinion is responding within the trend recorded for the rest of the EU members although it seems to be more responsive to developments not immediately associated with the EU per se and which are related to the “zero point energy” culture referred to above. In this regard I am inclined to treat these data with caution, especially those related to the CFSP or the CFSDP. That is to say high politics, even in cases not related with the EU are affecting the attitude towards the EU itself.

A big majority was recorded in favour of the unification attempts in W.Europe in every instance during the period 1983-2000. Of the respondents to the question whether they were in favour of the efforts to unify W.Europe 40% on average replied that they were strongly in favour, 30% were in favour to some extent (70% approx. these two categories together), whereas only approx. 15% were found to be against to some extent or very much against the unification attempts.

In every instance during the 20 years period those of the respondents that considered the EEC as a “good thing” were considerably more than those that considered it as a “bad thing” by a factor of 2.5 up to 1983 and by a factor of 5 - 10 from then onwards with a peak of

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75% vs. 6% in 1990 (a factor of 13 approx). Data as to the feeling of the respondents as to whether their country has benefited from the EEC show that since 1989 onwards the percentages in favour of European Unification match with those that feel that their country has benefited from the EEC. In every other instance up to 1989 (1980 - 1993) those of the respondents that thought that their country has benefited from the EEC are more by a factor of 2 than those that thought the opposite. If we observe the trend in both questions we may conclude that the anti-EEC attitude is declining sharply from 1990 onwards as it became apparent that the EU is the only block of stability in Europe and as the real situation in the former Soviet block countries was becoming apparent.

A similar point can be made with respect to the feelings of the respondents had the EEC been scrapped. It is only since 1988 that those who replied that they would have been indifferent had the EEC been scrapped were less than those that replied that they would have been sorry! Still 10% of the respondents (average 1981 - 1998) declared that they have been relieved had the EEC been scrapped. This percentage declines though from 1986 onwards to a mere 4% in 1990 from the 50% that it stood during the second six months of 1982 and becomes irrelevant from then onwards.

The Macedonia question at its peak at the beginning of the '90s and the war on Yugoslavia at the end of the '90s are the only instances during which support for

the European integration actually declines. By the same token, it increases during instances that the EU is seen, as protective of the national interests of the country such as is the case during the immediate aftermath of the Helsinki European Council with reference to the Greco-Turkish relations. On the whole, available Eurobarometer data show that there is a wide support for European Integration – amongst the highest in the EU – which slightly declines in time of international crises which are seen as affecting vital national interests.

Similar trends are recorded in the 2006 Eurobarometer Survey with 57% of the respondents evaluating positively the country's participation in the EU. Greeks tend to trust the EU by a margin of 65% which is the third highest after Slovenia (70%) and Romania (67%) although 34% of the respondents expressed mistrust, at any rate considerably less than the EU average (40%).

Concluding Remarks

Greece has been a member of the EEC / EU twenty six years. Nowadays, the situation seems to have been stabilised since the three major parties in Parliament, e.g. New Democracy, PASOK and the smaller Alliance of the Left (Synaspismos) are unanimous that the country must positively adapt in the new European environment and this attitude is unequivocally supported by a huge majority of the population. With the exception of the small Greek Communist Party no other party denies European Integration.

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The European policy of Greece is primarily the responsibility of the Government of the country. At the societal level the pattern seems the same: party political intervention ensures that no other form of political representation is capable of challenging that authority. At the European level the relations between the Government and the organised interests still project “a billiard ball image” as different actors promote the same positions in different fora. To a certain extent this is a structural problem in the sense that the differing levels of economic development between Greece and the other EEC member states facilitate a compromise internally on the need for pore resources from the various Community funds. This has been the main concern of the Greek European policy since 1981. Internally, although improvements are required in a number of issues, the political system has become more open, more transparent and less centralised through its EU membership.

European and International realities have considerably altered since the entry of the country in the EEC /EU. In the space of just fifteen years the original EEC treaties have been extensively modified creating a system of multilevel governance in search of its physiognomy. The country even contemplates to join in any high politics enhanced cooperation structures that may appear. This denotes the tremendous changes that this country has undergone from a state of denial to one of the more pro-integrationist member states.

¹ I am not referring to repatriation flows as a result of Balkan or Greco-Turkish wars such as in 1922.

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