

**dr. Török Attila**

**THE EUROPEAN UNION AND SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE. FACULTIES, POTENTIALITIES  
AND STRATEGIES: THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CATCH-UP PERFORMANCE  
OF BULGARIA, GREECE AND TURKEY IN VIEW OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION  
(THESES)**

1. Thesis:

The differences in value-hierarchies play an important role in the South-East enlargement of the European Union. The identities, typical of the three countries are differing, not just from one another, but in many respects from those prevailing in other EU countries. These differences are explained by various socio-cultural factors. These factors exert a strong influence on the acceptance/perception of the fundamental values of the EU within these societies. The similar, albeit not simultaneous problems of the European integration of Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey can also be traced back to these factors.

2. Thesis:

South-European members of the European Union support Turkey's accession against their direct agricultural and EU-related budgetary interests. This applies in particular to Spain and Italy. This position of South European EU members outlines an aspiration to increase the political weight of a "Mediterranean Centre of Gravity."

3. Thesis:

As far as Bulgaria is concerned, the marked polarisation in the position of member countries – similar to the one relating to Turkey – is not evident. The French-Italian support of Bulgarian integration is not linked specifically to this country. It is more reasonable to interpret this as residual to treating Bulgaria as part of a Romanian-Bulgarian block. Thus Bulgaria is beneficiary of the traditional support enjoyed by her „block partner."

#### 4. Thesis:

Unlike in most accession countries, the political institutions of Turkey, in particular her political culture in a broader sense did not undergo a rapid transformation. Macroeconomic instability is explained partly by the absence of this transformation.

#### 5. Thesis:

The regional organisations/initiatives in South-East Europe are not exempt from intentions reflecting the dynamics of regional conflicts. In these cases it is not difficult to find – behind the slogans of „all-Balkan interests” – the ambitions to encircle the opposing party.

#### 6. Thesis:

The low level of financial support from the European Union to Turkey is indicative of the European Union's position vis-à-vis the full membership of Turkey. Support levels strongly correlate with the deeper commitment of the EU towards individual accession countries. The importance of a financial support-based approach is, however, relativised in these countries by limitations on a rational-calculative (rational-choice) evaluation of the advantages of full membership, in comparison with other candidate countries.

#### 7. Thesis:

Citizens of accession countries are relatively well-informed about the European Union. They perceive it as a community of nations well-placed in rankings for welfare and democratic values. As far as the influence of full membership on their countries is concerned, their knowledge is, however, limited. The majority support of accession registered in all countries hints a rather peculiar disposition of social/mass psychology.

#### 8. Thesis

The fifteen year failure of Greece to catch up with more advanced European Union countries carries an important warning. In the absence of adequate institutions and economic structure not even the combination of full membership and substantial financial assistance guarantees narrowing the gap. Problems relating to competitiveness and structural deficiencies of less developed periphery economies are brought to light with renewed vigour subsequent to full membership.

9. Thesis:

The relationship of Turkey and the European Union is uniquely indicative of the EU's strategic goals and of its ability/willingness to absorb differing civilisations. The relevant hypotheses could best be tested through the future success or failure of Turkey's drive for full membership.

**7. A dolgozat és mellékletei: L. külön file**