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### ST 42 – « “Europeanisation Goes West” : Interroger les effets des élargissements de l’UE à l’Europe centrale sur son fonctionnement »

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#### MANAGEMENT AND CULTURE IN AN ENLARGED EUROPEAN COMMISSION : FROM DIVERSITY TO UNITY?

##### Résumé :

Enlargement posed a serious challenge for the European Commission, which set as a goal bringing on board thousands of new staff. How successful was the Commission in meeting this challenge? And how successful were the newcomers in integrating in to the organization? Now, after several years, can we see that the staff from Central and East European countries have had an impact on the organization? Answering these questions sheds new light on the evolution of the Commission’s organizational culture.

Le management et la culture dans une Commission européenne élargie : de la diversité à l’unité ?

L’élargissement a été un défi important pour la Commission européenne, qui a fixé pour objectif d’augmenter son personnel de plusieurs milliers de nouveaux membres. Dans quelle mesure la Commission a-t-elle réussi à relever ce défi ? Les nouveaux venus ont-ils réussi à s’intégrer dans l’organisation ? Peut-on voir aujourd’hui, après plusieurs années, que les officiels venus des pays d’Europe centrale et orientale ont eu un impact sur l’organisation ? Les réponses à ces questions éclairent l’évolution de la culture organisationnelle de la Commission.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The last decade saw the dramatic enlargement of the European Union, primarily through the entrance of 10 formerly Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE): Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovenia, which entered in 2004, (along with two smaller countries, Cyprus and Malta), as well as Romania and Bulgaria, the 2007 entrants. Much has been written about these countries’ transition from Communism to market economies and democratic governments and about the role of the EU in that process.<sup>1</sup> In addition, there have been several studies about the accession process itself, the long negotiations and the impact on the countries both of the changes required for entry and of actual membership.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See, among many others, Milada A Vachudova, 2005. *Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage, and Integration After Communism*: Oxford U. Press and Frank Schimmelfennig, and Ulrich Sedelmeier (Eds.). 2005. *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

<sup>2</sup> See especially Vassiliou, George (Ed.). 2007. *The Accession Story: the EU from Fifteen to Twenty-Five Countries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The enlargement also created a challenge for the institutions of the European Union, especially the European Commission, as they are required to represent all the citizens of Europe. My research focuses on three key questions: How did the Commission face this challenge? How well did the newcomers adapt to the Commission and how were they received? And did such a large influx of new officials have an effect on the management and culture of the Commission? This research is reported in my recent book.<sup>3</sup> In this brief paper, I will provide a short overview of the theoretical bases of the work and of my approach to the research. I will then attempt briefly to answer the three questions.

### ***RESEARCH APPROACH***

Given the complexity of the processes being studied, the most useful approach was multidisciplinary and inductive, including following the change process over several years. The data collection began in 2006 and was completed in 2012. This is not a traditional work of political science, although it clearly has relevance for political scientists. Among its intellectual roots are the following:

- Public management (including the nascent field of management of international organizations), for issues of representative bureaucracy and theories of administrative change
- Anthropology, for the central concept of organizational culture as well as for the use of ethnographic field research methods
- Social psychology, for the concepts of outsider/insider, socialization, and assimilation versus accommodation
- Sociolinguistics, for a theoretical framework for understanding the implications of the shift to greater use of English inside the European Commission, which was accelerated by the arrival of new staff.

To follow the process over time, I relied on a total of over 200 in-depth interviews, both within the European Commission and in six of the new member states. Within the Commission, repeated waves of interviews included both new subjects (especially after the second group of countries entered) and second interviews with many of the newcomers to gauge their adjustment over time. Interviews were transcribed and coded and analyzed using a qualitative data analysis program.

### ***SUCCESS IN RECRUITMENT, BUT WHAT KIND OF REPRESENTATIVE BUREAUCRACY?***

The process of responding to enlargement entailed, first, the setting of targets for recruitment for each of the new member states, ranging from 1367 posts for Poland, by far the largest, to 85 for tiny Malta. The total for both the 2004 and 2007 enlargements was 4,566 positions. Then the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) newly formed in response to the challenge of enlargement, managed the process of special competitions targeted specifically to applicants from the new member states. It is important to note that European institutions faced a fundamental conflict of values in offering special competitions by nationality: Article 27 of the Staff regulations states clearly that the staff should be broadly representative of the citizens of member states, but paragraph 3 states that no positions can be reserved for citizens

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<sup>3</sup> Carolyn Ban, 2013. *Management and Culture in an Enlarged European Commission: From Diversity to Unity?* Palgrave Macmillan .

of a specific country. As in past enlargements, the Commission resolved that conflict by formally suspending paragraph 3 for a period of time in order to target competitions specifically to the new member states. For the EU-10 countries, that transition period lasted five years and ended in December, 2010. For the EU-2 countries, the transition period extended to December 2011.

The majority of new staff were recruited at entry level, and, especially at that level, there was a high level of interest in the competitions. The entire process ran reasonably smoothly and was effective, so that the Commission actually exceeded the overall target, with a total of almost 5,000 people recruited by January 2012 (see Tables 1 and 2, below), although one must note that the initial goals for Poland and the Czech Republic were not quite met.<sup>4</sup> This number of new officials was roughly 20 percent of the size of the Commission staff pre-enlargement. This was a significant accomplishment for the Commission, made easier by the creation of the European Personnel Selection Office, which consolidated the process of recruiting staff, including offering the competition used to assess the quality of applicants across all of the EU institutions.

TABLE 1 EU-10 TARGETS AND NUMBER RECRUITED<sup>5</sup>

| NATIONALITY | PERCENT OF<br>TOT. TARGET | TARGET | RECRUITED | PERCENT OF<br>TARGET |
|-------------|---------------------------|--------|-----------|----------------------|
| Poland      | 39                        | 1367   | 1184      | 0.87                 |
| Czech Rep.  | 14.3                      | 502    | 439       | 0.87                 |
| Hungary     | 14.2                      | 499    | 594       | 1.19                 |
| Slovakia    | 8.1                       | 284    | 327       | 1.15                 |
| Lithuania   | 7                         | 246    | 296       | 1.20                 |
| Latvia      | 4.5                       | 158    | 202       | 1.28                 |
| Slovenia    | 3.9                       | 137    | 223       | 1.63                 |
| Estonia     | 3.4                       | 119    | 185       | 1.55                 |
| Cyprus      | 3.2                       | 112    | 112       | 1.00                 |
| Malta       | 2.4                       | 85     | 137       | 1.61                 |
| Total       | 100%                      | 3508   | 3699      | 1.05                 |

TABLE 2 EU-2 TARGETS AND NUMBER RECRUITED<sup>6</sup>

| NATIONALITY | PERCENT | TARGET | RECRUITED | PERCENT<br>OF<br>TARGET |
|-------------|---------|--------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Romania     | 66      | 645    | 770       | 1.19                    |
| Bulgaria    | 34      | 332    | 502       | 1.5                     |
| Total       | 100%    | 977    | 1272      | 1.23                    |

<sup>4</sup> See Ban,2103, 143.

<sup>5</sup> Sources: Figures for targets provided by DG HR. Targets reflect increased target set in 2008. Recruitment figures: European Commission, *Bulletin statistique*. January 2011.

<sup>6</sup> European Commission, *Bulletin statistique*. January 2012

While this was an important accomplishment, the process raises the question of what the Commission and the other European institutions mean when they speak of (or act on) the principle of representation. The literature on representative bureaucracy<sup>7</sup> distinguishes between passive and active representation. The former simply means that the organization is open to specific social groups or, in this case, nationalities, but not that the individuals' identity will shape their actions, while the latter assumes and demonstrates that, indeed, officials from different backgrounds act in ways that reflect their backgrounds. Within the Commission officials are charged with serving all of Europe, and it is, in fact, considered inappropriate even to speak too often about one's home country, let alone acting in ways that demonstrate favoritism or special advantages to one's fellow nationals.

At the same time, it is clear that senior officials in member states' governments (for both old and new members) follow very closely the numbers of their citizens being recruited and raise concerns if they are not satisfied with the rate of recruitment, so they clearly see some advantage in having their country represented within the Commission. In interviews, they expressed the belief that it mattered to their citizens to know that there was someone in Brussels to whom they could speak in their own language (although this assumes representation of every country on every policy area, clearly not realistic), and that officials coming from CEE countries would be able to shape implementation of new policies in ways that made sense in their national situations (a more realistic goal, and one that was quite important in such areas as environmental policy).

The recruitment process was designed to minimize overly active representation of national interests. Some of those participating in the formal interviews with candidates made it clear that those who appeared too nationalistic in their responses were unlikely to pass the competitions. And concerns about overly active representation were reflected in the skepticism with which some officials greeted their new colleagues, which, as we see below, meant that not all welcomed the newcomers enthusiastically.

### ***THE CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATING NEWCOMERS***

#### ***Adaptation versus accommodation, or one-way versus two-way learning and change***

Of course, all new staff members entering an organization face the challenges of integrating, even if they enter with strong technical skills and relevant experience. This includes learning the organization's operational procedures but also, critically, the more subtle norms shaping attitudes and behavior. This is normally conceptualized as the responsibility of the individual, although larger organizations, which recruit whole groups of staff, often have formal orientations for new employees and other supports to aid in what is generally seen as a socialization process. But in either case, the assumption is of one-way change, in which new entrants are assimilated into the organization and accept its ways of doing things.

The assumption of one-way change is generally appropriate for entry-level staff but raises challenges for those entering at a higher organizational level as mid-level or senior managers. There is less extensive literature on recruitment of new managers from outside the organization, but most of that research has focused on the external recruitment of top leaders, which is normally a strategy when an organization is perceived as needing to be shaken up or to change dramatically to deal with a problem. Thus new managers would be expected to

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<sup>7</sup> Magali Gravier. "The 2004 Enlargement Staff Policy of the European Commission: The Case for Representative Bureaucracy." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 46, no. 5 (2008): 1025-47.

question and even challenge the status quo. In that case, the process of entry is perceived as one of two-way change, in which the individual adapts to the organization, but the organization is flexible enough to accommodate the needs or proposals for change of the new managers.<sup>8</sup> That assumption of two-way learning and change is less clear-cut if the recruitment of new managers was not, in fact, motivated by a desire to bring in leaders with new ideas that they would introduce into the organization.

### ***In-group versus Out-group***

Even if the individual makes a concerted effort, he or she may not be easily or fully accepted. The social psychological literature on diversity and prejudice focuses on somewhat different characteristics of the individual and group, making it clear that not all outsiders are equally welcomed. The more different the newcomer is perceived as being, the harder he or she will find it to fit in and to be accepted. The perceived degree of “differentness” can be a function of race, gender, religion, or social class, but, in an international context, it is likely to be a question of cultural distance<sup>9</sup> or of status or power difference between the “in-group” and the “out-group” to which the newcomer is seen as belonging. In other words, those trying to enter an organization who are seen as culturally similar and of a status or power level equal to or higher than those already inside are more likely to be selected and, if joining the organization, to be accepted.<sup>10</sup>

In contrast, social identification of whole groups as “outsiders” or as undesirable may lead to negative stereotyping and prejudice by those already inside the organization against members of the “out-group,” who are seen as having less power or status.<sup>11</sup> Those who succeed in entering from such groups thus face problems in being fully accepted (what Feldman refers to as “crossing the ‘inclusionary boundary’”<sup>12</sup>), and, rather than being fully welcomed, may encounter reactions ranging from subtle avoidance to active hostility. Those who know that they are members of a group identified with negative stereotypes face a dilemma, known by social psychologists as “attributional ambiguity”: If they experience behavior that appears to be rude or inappropriate, they are likely to wonder whether this was just because they were new to the organization or whether the behavior could be attributed to prejudice.<sup>13</sup>

### ***The role of organizational culture: helping or hindering acceptance of newcomers?***

A detailed analysis of the organizational culture of the Commission is beyond the scope of this short paper. I focus here on only three aspects of the culture that may shape the response

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<sup>8</sup> Richard Moreland and John Levine. 1989. "Newcomers and Oldtimers in Small Groups." in *Psychology of Group Influence*, edited by Paul Paulus. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

<sup>9</sup> Feldman, Daniel. 1997. "Socialization in an International Context." *International Journal of Selection and Assessment* 5(1):1-8.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen Wright, and Donald Taylor. 2003. "The Social Psychology of Cultural Diversity: Social Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Discrimination." in *The Sage Handbook of Social Psychology*, edited by Michael Hogg and Joel Cooper. London: Sage Publications.

<sup>11</sup> Allport, Gordon. 1954. *The Nature of Prejudice*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company; Hogg, Michael, and Dominic Abrams. 2003. "Intergroup Behavior and Social Identity." in *The Sage Handbook of Social Psychology*, edited by Michael Hogg and Joel Cooper. London: Sage Publications.

<sup>12</sup> Feldman, *op.cit.* 2.

<sup>13</sup> Hogg and Abrams, *op.cit.* 418.

to new officials and managers. First, it is certainly not surprising that Commission staff see their organization as very multicultural and cosmopolitan. This is what one would expect of an organization with staff from such a wide range of countries, with so many different languages and home cultures. Indeed, many staff see this as one of the qualities that made the Commission an attractive place to work, and one would expect that such a culture would be quite welcoming to new staff and tolerant of minor cultural differences.

However, the Commission is also a strongly elitist organization, and that is seen as a positive trait. Officials in the Administrator (AD) group almost all have graduate degrees, often from prestigious universities. Many have extensive prior work experience or have served in the Commission for many years, and all are proud of the fact that they survived the extremely challenging process of the competition to enter. So it is not an exaggeration to say that they have a high opinion of themselves and of their organization and that they fit the concept of an “in-group,” as defined by social psychologists. That can feed a skepticism about newcomers arriving from what one person I interviewed termed “some exotic country.” Some of those entering from CEE countries report being aware of that skepticism and feeling that they had to prove themselves in order to be fully accepted as “European.”

Another characteristic of the Commission is that it is often highly competitive, especially in the top DGs. There is a kind of ranking of DGs by their prestige, power, and status, with relatively high levels of consensus on which would be ranked at the top. And, especially within those DGs, the level of competition can be intense, even “brutal,” in the French sense of the word. In that environment, newcomers can be pushed very hard, given very challenging assignments, and judged quickly, sometimes without even realizing that this is happening. Those perceived as not “à l’ hauteur,” are never dismissed, but they are sidelined and may not understand why they are not receiving the promotions that they expect. In some cases, managers are moved into non-managerial positions, such as advisors, where they may languish for years. I should note that not all advisors are, in fact, failed managers, and many play important functions, but one such advisor bemoaned the use of that title for people who have been placed “on the shelf” (*dans le placard*). Even if new managers are accepted, the combination of elitism and competition reduces the probability that current officials will accept the idea of two-way learning or of accommodating to or accepting efforts by new managers to introduce change.

### ***Entry-level recruits in the European Commission: fitting in***

Overall, the European Commission was quite successful in integrating new entry-level staff, in part because they drew lessons from the problems they encountered during the previous enlargement, in 1995, when there was a relatively high level of failures and of people who felt they did not fit in and departed. This time, the Commission put in place formal systems to help newcomers to adapt, including newcomers’ training (conducted for new staff of all European institutions together), as well as training, mentoring, and coaching organized within DGs. The majority of those interviewed reported being made to feel welcome and getting adequate support from their Heads of Unit and colleagues.

The assimilation of new staff was eased because of their own backgrounds. The majority of new staff were recruited at entry level. Most were young and so entered the workforce only after the transition from Communism. Rather than having been socialized into a communist or post-communist government bureaucracy, almost all had completed a graduate degree, most often in some aspect of European studies, such as law, economics, or political science, preparing consciously for a career in Europe even before their country had been admitted.

They had often studied or worked abroad and so were quite cosmopolitan in outlook and multilingual, most with command of three or more languages. In short, their backgrounds were very similar to those coming from “old” member states, and in many cases their managers made very positive comments about their motivation, abilities, and language skills. Their international backgrounds have a bearing on the issue of representative bureaucracy, as those recruited were far from typical of their countrymen in education or experience. In the extreme, some held citizenship of a new member state but had lived for much of their lives outside of that country.

That is not to say that all staff were equally welcoming. Some of those entering from CEE countries understood that they were, at least to some extent, seen as belonging to an “out-group” and feared that they would be marginalized and seen as in some way second-class members of the organization. It is hard to gauge the extent to which those already inside the Commission held negative views of the newcomers. Certainly they knew it was inappropriate to express such views in formal interviews, but such views were more often expressed in informal settings, sometimes quite vehemently, including, for example, by one woman who asserted that the best of the candidates were quite quickly selected from the Reserve Lists, but that the majority were “nul nul, nul.”

#### ***Mid-Level and Senior Managers: More Difficult Challenges***

The goals of those coming in at entry level were to fit in, to master the technical aspects of the job as well as the unwritten norms, and to be accepted and respected, and for the most part they are succeeding in meeting those goals. In contrast, the entry of senior managers was a greater challenge, both for the individuals and for the organization itself. Put simply, managers who enter expect to manage, which includes introducing changes in policy or in management. However, several aspects of the organizational culture and of the backgrounds of the new managers interacted, sometimes calling into question the organization’s ability not only to assimilate newcomers but to accommodate to them, that is, to be responsive to their needs and also to learn from them, and to accept proposals for change initiated by them.

First, the process of recruitment was very different for managers. While thousands of young people applied for entry-level positions, it was more difficult to convince those who were already successful managers, with good career prospects, spouses, and parental responsibilities to uproot themselves, particularly since they then had to complete a probationary period upon entry (a fact that some had not grasped before entering). Recruitment for both mid-level and senior managers thus posed particular challenges and often required more active and targeted strategies to encourage applications and a reduction in the years of experience required, because, as one interviewee reported, “otherwise we would have excluded everybody except for the old Communists. All the young people would have been too young to apply... So it’s perfectly possible to come in in your mid 30s.”

Commission managers who had already developed formal or informal relationships within the new member states during the accession negotiations or through professional networks reached out and encouraged applications from those they already knew, particularly via the accession negotiations. At the same time, some of those who entered reported being pushed to apply by top leaders within their country, who wanted to make sure they were well-represented within the Commission. The third option was self-selection, as there were clearly a sizeable number of people who were waiting for the competitions to be announced and applied very much on their own.

The backgrounds of new managers were varied. About 80 percent of senior managers came from government, while the careers of Heads of Unit were more diverse. Most of those interviewed fell into one of three categories: EU experts (including the many people responsible for playing a role in accession negotiations); technical experts, with degrees and experience in such fields as the environment, health care; or trade policy; and managers from international organizations. Many had already had complicated and interesting career paths, in part due to the upheaval of the transition from Communism. While many were, in fact, old enough to have worked in government under Communist regimes, some had left their home countries because of their opposition to the regime. Overall, those entering from the new member states as managers definitely brought greater diversity in education, career paths, and management experience than the majority of EU-15 managers. What the new managers, themselves, view as their own contribution is that, precisely because of their wide-ranging experiences, they are adaptable and often creative in dealing with new situations, and they recognize that they bring diverse perspectives to the organization.

Once they entered, new managers were provided with training, for many in the form of executive coaching, to help them learn how to operate effectively within the complex formal structure and organizational culture of the Commission. But in spite of that formal support, many faced greater challenges than they had anticipated. Four factors contributed to the variation in their experiences:

*Organizational complexity and prior familiarity with the European Commission:* Those who reported minimal problems of transition generally stated that they had already worked closely with the Commission, had professional knowledge and experience in their area of responsibility, had solid management experience, or had worked in an international organization. Conversely, those who struggled reported being initially unsure of how the system worked, suffering a bit of culture shock, and trying to figure out what their place was in a “steep,” “robust” bureaucracy. Some directors (and even one Deputy Director General) reported a lack of role clarity and stressed the importance of direct support from the Director General in carving out an appropriate role.

*Formal rules versus informal norms:* Not only is the EC complex, but, as many reported, knowing the formal rules is of only limited utility; the organization operates on a parallel set of informal norms. In organizational culture terms, this is clearly a “high-context” organization, in which a lot of background or contextual information is assumed and unspoken, in which communication can be quite indirect, and in which things get done not just through the formal mechanisms but through informal networks that individuals develop throughout their career. These can be based on nationality but often reflect shared knowledge of a specific policy domain or past experience working together. This aspect of the culture creates a particular challenge for new managers since, almost by definition, they lack such networks, although those who came in after working closely with the Commission from the outside had at least the beginnings of such a network.

*Level in the hierarchy:* Taken as a whole, across all DGs, directors split almost evenly between those who saw the process of entry as relatively easy and those who found it at least somewhat difficult, while the heads of unit had a different reaction: Roughly two-thirds said that on balance the entry process had been difficult. Indeed, the role of head of unit is particularly challenging, and even more so for those heading units in substantive fields in which they do not have prior experience. Those who entered new positions created



especially for the CEE recruitment had the challenge of starting from scratch rather than taking over direction of what one termed “a train already running down the track.”

*Extent of support or hostility encountered:* Given the need to learn how the system actually worked, any new manager must rely on his or her staff to guide the way. In most cases, new managers received the needed help and support, but some encountered grudging support, particularly from those staff who resented the newly arriving manager who was seeing as taking a place that he or she should rightfully have been promoted into. It is certainly true that all new managers entering from outside organizations need to prove themselves, but that was perhaps more true in the EC both because of this resentment and because, in at least some cases, there was skepticism of the skills of people coming from CEE countries. The power dynamic of that situation was made clear by those who said that just recently they had been negotiating with people within these countries and telling them what they had to do to be admitted to the EU, so it was difficult now to take direction from them.

### ***DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS: IMPACT OF ENLARGEMENT***

When I began this research, I did not intend to write a book about gender issues, but the advantage of an inductive approach is that one does not begin with highly developed hypotheses are that confirmed or disconfirmed. Rather, one takes a more exploratory approach. That included posing to all those interviewed within the Commission the simple question “What difference has enlargement made in the Commission?” The two most common responses were “There is more use of English,” and second, “There are a lot more women now.” The language issues are beyond the scope of this brief paper but are covered in detail in the book. Here I briefly summarize why the Commission made a conscious effort to recruit women, why they were successful, and the challenges that women (especially managers) faced when they entered the Commission.

#### ***The Commission’s focus on gender: demand and supply***

Until fairly recently, gender was not a major focus of EC recruitment policy. But that changed as a result of the 1995 enlargement, a clear example of how a previous enlargement changed Commission culture. The Scandinavian countries looked around, upon entering, and, in effect, asked “Where are the women?” Swedish officials and commissioners, reflecting the importance of gender equity in their national policies, pressed the Commission to focus on the issue of gender and to improve their gender balance.

Given the plans to recruit thousands of new officials after the 2004/2007 enlargements, Commission leaders recognized that they had a unique opportunity to make a real difference in the demographics of the Commission, and they consciously seized that opportunity, creating a demand for women by actively encouraging women to apply and by ensuring, as much as possible, that selection methods did not introduce gender balance. Fortunately for the Commission, that demand could be met because of the ample supply of women with the appropriate education and experience. Historically, across the CEE countries, Communist ideology stressed gender equity, and that was not empty rhetoric. Women had equal access to free education through university, with many receiving scientific or engineering degrees, women were expected to work and there was very high labor-force participation, and it was common for women to move up into management, particularly inside government organizations. This does not mean that there was complete gender equity, but still, as one women interviewed put it, “Communism was a terrible system, but it was pretty good for women.”

***Success in recruitment of women by country***

As Table three makes clear, the preponderance of women in the groups recruited was sometimes dramatic; for three countries, over 70 percent of those recruited into professional positions were women, and the percent was above 50 percent for all of the CEE countries, with only Cyprus and Malta falling below that line. Not surprisingly, those recruited for Assistant positions (AST), which included traditionally female dominated positions such as secretary, were even more heavily female.

TABLE 3  
PERCENT OF WOMEN FROM EU-12 COUNTRIES IN PROFESSIONAL (AD)  
POSITIONS<sup>14</sup>

|           | Percent<br>Female |
|-----------|-------------------|
| LATVIA    | 77                |
| ESTONIA   | 75                |
| ROMANIA   | 73                |
| SLOVENIA  | 67                |
| BULGARIA  | 65                |
| LITHUANIA | 65                |
| POLAND    | 58                |
| SLOVAKIA  | 57                |
| CZECH REP | 55                |
| HUNGARY   | 54                |
| MALTA     | 49                |
| CYPRUS    | 42                |
|           |                   |
| AVE       | 61                |

The contrast between the ‘new’ and ‘old’ member states is very dramatic. Table 4 shows the percentage of women in the AD staff from EU-15 countries in 2012 compared to 2004, just prior to enlargement. It shows that even in 2012 only Finland had more than fifty percent of women among professional staff, while the Netherlands had a startlingly low 22 percent. What is particularly striking about these figures is the lack of much progress, with only one country, Germany, showing a clear increase of nine percent. In fact, overall, the percent of women from these countries went up only two percent. Thus it is clear that, especially at the professional level, absent enlargement, the Commission would have taken many years to reach the current level of female representation. Taking the two groups of countries together, the total representation of women in professional positions reached 41 percent in 2012. The increased percentage of women is particularly visible at the AD 5 level, the current entry level for most professional staff, which as of April, 2015, was 55 percent female.<sup>15</sup> Because of the scale of recruitment, the new entry-level officials comprise a demographic bulge that will gradually move up the steps of promotion. It will be very important to track their progression and see if the women are, in fact, promoted as rapidly as men, both at the early stages and when they become qualified for management positions.

<sup>14</sup> European Commission, *Bulletin statistique*. 2012.

<sup>15</sup> European Commission, *Bulletin statistique*, April 2015.

TABLE 4  
 PERCENT OF WOMEN FROM EU-15 COUNTRIES IN PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS<sup>16</sup>

|             | 2004 | 2012 |
|-------------|------|------|
|             | A/LA | AD   |
| FINLAND     | 54   | 60   |
| SWEDEN      | 45   | 49   |
| PORTUGAL    | 42   | 43   |
| SPAIN       | 45   | 36   |
| ITALY       | 32   | 36   |
| DENMARK     | 28   | 39   |
| AUSTRIA     | 30   | 33   |
| FRANCE      | 30   | 35   |
| GREECE      | 33   | 33   |
| GERMANY     | 22   | 31   |
| IRELAND     | 25   | 33   |
| LUXEMBOURG  | 21   | 28   |
| BELGIUM     | 24   | 25   |
| GRT BRT     | 20   | 28   |
| NETHERL     | 20   | 22   |
|             |      |      |
| OVERALL AVE | 30   | 32   |

<sup>16</sup> European Commission, *Bulletin statistique*, 2012. European Commission, *Bulletin statistique*, April 2004.

The Commission will not have to wait for the new entry-level officials to move up the ladder in order to increase the number of women managers, as women were also recruited directly at mid-manager and senior manager levels. Unfortunately, the published statistics do not distinguish managers from non-managers. Still, if one looks at the very highest three grades (Table 5), one can be confident that virtually all of that relatively small group will be senior managers. Looking first at those in top grades from all member states, the picture is hardly one of gender balance, as only 20 percent are female. Further, at the very highest level, AD 16 (primarily directors general), only 16 percent are women. Still, the trend over time shows the impact of enlargement and of EC policy regarding promotion of women, as in 2004, just before enlargement, only 14 percent of senior officials were women.

TABLE 5 GENDER OF SENIOR STAFF AD 14-16<sup>17</sup>

| GRADE | FEMALE | %  | MALE | %  | TOTAL |
|-------|--------|----|------|----|-------|
| 16    | 5      | 16 | 27   | 84 | 32    |
| 15    | 47     | 24 | 150  | 76 | 197   |
| 14    | 91     | 19 | 382  | 81 | 473   |
|       | 143    | 20 | 80   | 83 | 702   |

When one breaks these figures down by region (Table 6), it becomes clear that the improvement is largely the result of enlargement. The contrast is very clear, although the relatively low number of people hired at senior levels means that the effect on the total percentage of women at senior level has been slight.

TABLE 6 GENDER BY NATIONAL GROUP AD 14-16<sup>18</sup>

|       | FEMALE | %  | MALE | %  | TOTAL |
|-------|--------|----|------|----|-------|
| EU-2  | 4      | 40 | 6    | 60 | 10    |
| EU-10 | 21     | 37 | 35   | 63 | 56    |
| EU-15 | 117    | 18 | 519  | 82 | 636   |
|       | 142    | 20 | 560  | 80 | 702   |

In sum, the record is clear. The enlargement has made a significant difference in the gender balance within the European Commission, primarily at the professional level (AD), with women comprising 60 percent of those recruited from the new member states since enlargement. A substantial number of women also entered as managers, although they were not a majority of those recruited at these levels. But the Commission still exhibits a traditional pattern with a strong majority of women in lower grades and in less permanent employment categories.

#### *Women Managers: Doubly different?*

As discussed above, managers (especially heads of unit) often found organizational entry challenging. This was particularly true for women. Some obstacles were formal, including the organizational assumptions about appropriate work hours. Since the Commission made a conscious decision to lower the number of years of experience needed to apply as a manager,

<sup>17</sup> European Commission, *Bulletin statistique*, 2012.

<sup>18</sup> *Op. cit.*

some women recruited as managers still had quite young children at home and found the widespread tendency to hold evening meetings particularly difficult. One such woman, who had broad international work experience prior to entry, reported that the Commission was the most sexist organization she had ever worked in and particularly cited evening meetings as problematic.

But women also faced the kinds of challenges discussed above, of being perceived as a member of an out-group, who is trying to be accepted into the in-group. The literature on assimilation of newcomers, discussed above, reports that the perceived degree of “differentness” affects that process. Clearly, the fundamental challenge of diversity, including gender diversity, is how to integrate people who are seen as different. The question, then, is not only the extent to which those coming from the new member states were seen as somehow different but whether women from those countries were in some way doubly different. At a mass level within the European Union, research has shown that “the integrative effect of enlargement depends on the extent to which acceding nations differ from the present club members.... Recent enlargement has made an already diverse Community even more diverse, particularly with respect to modernization levels and culture.”<sup>19</sup> Does the same phenomenon apply to women?

There are, in fact, close parallels between the experiences of women and of people coming from the new member states into the European Commission, even apart from the obvious overlap between the two groups. Both are the focus of formal programs to improve their representation, with targets for recruitment and formal efforts of socialization or encouragement, but in both cases, this is a decidedly mixed blessing, since the need to fill a quota has occasionally led to the cynical behavior of throwing someone into a position for which he or she is not fully qualified simply in order to check off the box and move on. Not only does that set some individuals up for failure or at least ensure that they have a very stressful entry, it also reinforces the logic of tokenism: the assumption by their colleagues that even those with excellent credentials are there only because of nationality or gender. This accentuates the perception that they are outsiders, and it intensifies the need for them to prove themselves to be accepted as fully equal and not just as someone brought in to fill a quota. This was acknowledged by a director in DG Human Resources (HR), speaking about senior managers:

Now and again, for reasons I think that have to do with jealousy and insecurity more than anything else, people can be talked about as the token woman, and it’s the same phenomenon as the token new member state senior manager. So it’s exactly the same. It’s a different group, a different population, a slightly different dynamic, but it’s the same sort of problem: it’s validity within the overall context.

The result is that women from the new member states are, in a sense, doubly different, sometimes facing negative stereotypes about both their gender and their national origin and having to fight to be respected and taken seriously. And the sense of differentness (and the resentment) was sometimes accentuated when women in top management positions were much younger than the managers who reported to them. All managers go through a process of being tested, but this dynamic means that CEE women were particularly likely to report

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<sup>19</sup> Jan Delhey. 2007. "Do Enlargements Make the European Union Less Cohesive? An Analysis of Trust between EU Nationalities." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 45(2): 273.

being pushed hard and having to push back on occasion. It is, of course, impossible to tell, but it is clear that several CEE women, including those at very high levels, believe that both new member state managers and women are held to a higher standard than men or those from the old member states, as they are, in a sense, double outsiders.

### ***IMPACT OF NEWCOMERS ON THE ORGANIZATION***

Probably the full impact of enlargement on the organization is still not fully evident, but more than 10 years after the 2004 enlargement, and close to 10 years after the first significant influx of new officials, we can see some impacts. Looking at the latest figures on Commission staff,<sup>20</sup> we can see the continued impact on demography. The overall percentage of AD staff who are female is up slightly since 2012, to 42 percent, primarily still because of the heavy representation of women from the CEE countries. Only a handful of “old” member states showed more than a percentage point or two of improvement from 2012 to 2015, with Belgium, Sweden, Greece, and Great Britain increasing by 4 percent. An initial analysis shows that officials from CEE countries are now clearly moving up to higher grade levels, although, as in the past, there is no way to identify numbers who are in management position. It remains difficult, however, to tease out whether there is a distinctive contribution of the CEE officials and managers. This is clearly not a homogeneous group, and what characterizes the CEE managers is precisely the diversity of the experiences they bring to the Commission. But the openness of the Commission to learning from those experiences is still questionable.

One can also ask whether the large number of women, especially woman managers, has made a difference. Here one faces the long-running debate in the literature on whether, in fact, women have a distinctive management approach. What is clear, within the Commission, is that many people (male and female) do believe that women manage differently and that having more women in management has helped the organization. They characterized the women as less combative, and more oriented toward people management. In fact, senior women from the new member states were often more explicit than other women managers interviewed about their approach to management. They were far more likely than women from EU-15 countries who had risen up through the ranks to report that, when they entered, they made conscious efforts to introduce different management approaches, particularly more participative or even democratic management styles. Several made it clear that this had not been easy, and that the changes made their staffs uncomfortable, but that they had persevered. What remains to be seen is whether their more democratic or at least participative approach will spread to others or whether it will remain an anomaly within an organization that is still dominated by rather traditional top-down managers. To a great extent, the extent to which the CEE managers succeed over the long run in changing the organization as a whole, and especially its management culture, will depend on their ability to move into the top management positions, where they have the power to introduce formal changes and to serve as role models for other managers within the Commission.

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<sup>20</sup> European Commission, *Bulletin statistique*, April 2015,