From Existential Politics Towards Normal Politics? The Baltic States in the Enlarged Europe

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This article presents a critical discourse analysis of the Baltic states' self-positioning within European foreign policy. It argues that, despite certain relief in their immediate security concerns after the dual enlargement of the EU and NATO, the shift from existential politics to normal politics by the Baltic states is far from being accomplished. The way in which the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) have responded to the construction of their identity as 'Europe but not Europe' throughout the enlargement processes of the EU and NATO has been largely neglected in empirical studies on their post-Cold War self-conceptualizations in the European arena. Yet, the experience of being framed as simultaneously in Europe and not quite European has left a constitutive imprint on the current security imaginary of the Baltic states. William Connolly's concept of the politics of becoming is thus applied to analyse the Baltic version of becoming a subject in the field of common European foreign policy.

Keywords Baltic states • existential politics • European foreign policy • politics of becoming • discourse analysis

Introduction

THE ANALYTICAL PREMISE of this article is a Sartrean dictum: 'We are what we make of what others have made of us'.[1] Since its inception in the age of Enlightenment, the notion of Eastern Europe has been the embodiment of liminality, of the state 'betwixt and between' (see Turner, 1969) in Europe's self-image. Indeed, Western Europe 'invented' Eastern Europe as its complementary other half in the 18th century, locating it on the

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[1] In the preface to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, Jean-Paul Sartre (1965) writes that 'we only become what we are by the radical and deep-seated refusal of that which others have made of us'; see also O'Donohoe (2005).

developmental scale that measured the distance between civilization and barbarism (Wolff, 1994: 4–13). Ever since, Eastern Europe has been designated as geographically part of Europe, but in the perpetual process of becoming European, as a paradoxical 'Europe but not Europe' (Wolff, 1994: 7; see also Neumann, 1999). The post-Cold War eastwards enlargement processes of the European Union and NATO have been the most recent manifestation of this dual framing of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) (Kuus, 2004; Mälksoo, 2004).

Interestingly, however, the way the CEE countries have responded to the experience of being constructed as 'liminal Europeans' has largely escaped scholarly attention so far. Notwithstanding a handful of studies on the impact of the 'Europe but not Europe' designation on East Europeans' practices of othering Russia (Browning & Joenniemi, 2003; Miniotaite, 2003; Kuus, 2004), the interplay of their experience of 'liminal Europeanness' and their current self-positioning in the field of common European foreign and security policy remains curiously underexplored. Yet, the 'other's response to the construction of its identity is a very important dimension of any self/other interaction for self and other are not only mutually constitutive entities but also necessarily unbounded, merging into one another' (Neumann, 1999: 36). As collective identities are overlapping and multifaceted phenomena, they cannot be studied univocally, in isolation from one another, but always in relation to other collective identities (Neumann, 1996: 139). Constructions of the 'other' thus reveal something essential about the 'self' – and vice versa. The encounter with the other might disclose the 'other' in oneself, as the other often mirrors and represents what is deeply familiar to the self (centre), but projected out of itself (Sarup, 1996: 57; see also Derrida, 1976). The response of the 'other' to the construction of its identity does not necessarily signify purposive acts directed back at the 'self', but could rather be conceptualized as a spectrum varying between recognition and resistance (Rumelili, 2004: 37–39).

The puzzled combination of recognition and resistance captures succinctly what the Baltic states have made of their experience of being framed as 'Europe but not quite Europe' in their post-accession self-conceptualizations vis-à-vis the field of common European foreign policy. In this article, I will pinpoint the main parameters of the self-positioning of the Baltic states within EU foreign policy via critical discourse analysis of the relevant Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian foreign policy texts.[2] I will first establish the analytical axis of existential politics, normal politics and the politics of becoming,

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[2] The empirical corpus includes speeches, interventions, remarks and articles by their respective foreign policy establishments (i.e. foreign and defence ministers, presidents, foreign ministry officials and ambassadors, and members of the European Parliament). It should be noted, however, that beyond the official speeches targeted mostly to English-speaking audiences, my supporting empirical data are representative rather than exhaustive. As a native of Estonia, with no knowledge of Latvian and Lithuanian, I could only use the texts in Estonian for drawing in examples of the 'out of the government box' discussions.

against which backdrop the Baltic states' current self-positioning in the common foreign policy of Europe will be analysed. Then, the discussion turns to the constitutive imprint that the experience of being framed as simultaneously in Europe but not quite European has left on the current security imaginary of the Baltic states. More specifically, I will investigate the attempts of the Baltic states to influence EU policies on Russia and the new Eastern neighbours of the Union.

Before turning to the actual empirical material, a methodological note is due. In the Foucauldian discourse-theoretical approach adopted in the article, discourse is understood as a relational system of signification that constructs social realities and is productive/reproductive of things defined by it. The idea behind a discourse-analytic approach is not to look for the 'truth' nor to reveal the 'motives' of actors in the process, but rather to trace the boundaries within which truth claims have been put forward, maintained and transformed. Discourse is not understood here as a medium through which policymakers can manipulate the world as they wish, but as part of reality, both constituted by and constitutive of the discoursing subjects (Foucault, 1984, 1990). The question of interest for the purposes of this study is what does the Baltic states' discourse on EU foreign policy tell us about their understanding of themselves, their vision of the EU's role in international politics and their own place within it.

The Existential Politics of Becoming European

The foreign policy of the Baltic states has been dominated by concerns of survival since the emergence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on the world map as independent states after the end of World War I. Since that time, the foreign policy of the Baltic states has been intertwined with security considerations, seeking to buttress the countries' independent existence in every possible way. The quest of the Baltic states for membership in the EU and NATO has been the politics of survival par excellence, aimed at securing Western security guarantees against historically aggressive and unstable neighbouring Russia. Survival by belonging to Europe, by becoming European, has thus dictated the foreign policies of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania since the end of the Cold War.

Conventional wisdom holds that now, when the Baltic states have been successfully included in both the EU and NATO, and have thus effectively become European, we should witness a gradual decrease of existentialism in their pursuit of foreign affairs, as well as an increase of so-called normal politics. The bifurcation of the concept of politics into existential and normal politics is the context in which the Copenhagen School's securitization theory

functions. The backbone of the securitization theory is the understanding of security as a speech-act through which issues become formulated as security issues and 'existential threats' represented and recognized, calling for and justifying extreme measures (Wæver, 1995: 55). Via the process of securitization, issues are taken out of the realm of normal day-to-day politics and moved into the sphere of extraordinary politics or the politics of emergency (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1998: 26; see also Williams, 2003). In the presenting of something as an 'existential threat', its absolute priority is implied: 'if we do not tackle this problem, everything else will be irrelevant (because we will not be here or will not be free to deal with it in our own way)' (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1998: 24). Hence, the concept of existential politics has a dual meaning: as the expression of utmost securitization, it refers to exceptional or extraordinary politics, implicitly defined in the securitization theory as the antipode of 'normal' democratic rules of the game;[3] in addition, in a more *existentialist* meaning of the word, existential politics also refers to the politics of survival – not merely signifying the seeking of physical survival for an entity in the international arena but also referring to the quest for *meaningful survival*; indeed, for survival as a certain sort of being, and the quest to be recognized as such by the 'significant other(s)' (see Wæver, 1993: 23; Whiteside, 1988: 88). In that sense, if one were to paraphrase Gertrude Stein, existential politics is security politics is identity politics.

It is in the latter meaning that the notion of existential politics is applied to the Baltic states' post-accession self-positioning in the European foreign policy field. Normal politics is respectively understood here as the expected, yet incomplete, desecuritization of the self-conceptualizations of the Baltic states after their inclusion within the EU and NATO. The notion of the politics of becoming, conceptualized by William Connolly (1999: 136) as the 'paradoxical politics by which new cultural identities are formed out of old energies, injuries, and differences', genuinely reflects the inherently processual nature of collective identity formation and the related production of a collectivity's security imaginary. After all, identity is always a becoming, not being; a process continuously in the making, not a static 'thing' (Calhoun, 1994). In similarity with the Turnerian understanding of liminality as a permanent condition, 'there is always a new round in the politics of becoming for in a world where things are mobile at bottom, Being, as stable essence, never arrives' (Connolly, 1999: 139). The politics of becoming is thus an apt metaphor for capturing the never-ending process of collective identity production and reproduction.

This article argues, then, that despite certain relief in their immediate security concerns after the dual enlargement, the shift by the Baltic states

[3] In fact, 'normal politics' remains unpacked by the Copenhagen School, but it has been suggested (e.g. Aradau, 2004) that the normal politics implied by the framework of securitization is that of liberal democracy.

from existential politics to normal politics is far from being accomplished. Although they have reached the key way markers of their politics of becoming European, the self-image of the Baltic states in the EU and their self-positioning in the common European foreign policy are accordingly still dominated by 'old energies, injuries, and differences', out of which a new cultural identity has yet to be formed.[4] The Baltic states' struggle for over a decade to be recognized as 'true' Europeans (Huang, 2003; Matsulevitsh, 2003) now continues within the common European structures as a quest for a more sympathetic understanding of their identity/difference constellation on the part of their 'old' European partners, and, consequently, for a clearer and firmer EU policy vis-à-vis Russia and the new Eastern neighbours of the Union. There are even voices arguing that, having achieved membership in the EU, the policy of the Baltic states towards Russia has returned to a more confrontational line that had to be suppressed in the course of seeking membership in the Union (Kværno & Rasmussen, 2005: 90–91). This is partly due to the fact that Russia has not let herself be disturbed by the Baltic states' full-fledged membership of the key Euro-Atlantic organizations, and continuously attempts to discredit the Baltic states in the eyes of their Western partners and allies.[5] The hopes for loosening tensions in relations with Russia after the accession to the EU and NATO (as expressed, for example, by Mihkelson, 2003) have indeed not been quite fulfilled.

'Europe But Not Europe'

Achieving full-fledged membership of the EU officially completed the Baltic states' quest for 'return to Europe'. Their politics of becoming European, however, is still in process, as we can clearly witness by studying their self-positioning in the field of EU foreign policy. An unavoidable period of apprenticeship in order to get adjusted to the Union's institutions and working culture is, of course, a trend common to all EU newcomers (Uibo, 2005; Valášek, 2005). However, there is an odd dualism in the Baltic states' representation of EU foreign policy: On the one hand, the Baltic Three clearly identify themselves as part of 'Europe proper' – the EU – and thus envision their foreign policies as already part and parcel of the common foreign policy of the Union. On the other hand, EU foreign policy is constructed in such a detached manner at times (especially in the media) that one is left with an

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[4] For example, Valdas Adamkus (2004), the president of Lithuania, considers his country to be 'not yet a truly European nation'; Lithuanian scholars, in their turn, regard the contents of the European identity of Lithuania as 'not clear' (Gricius & Paulauskas, 2004: 71).

[5] Consider, for example, Russia's initial refusal to automatically extend the Russia–EU Partnership and Cooperation Agreement to the new members, as well as Russia's continuing criticism of Estonia and Latvia within the OSCE.

impression of it happening outside the Baltic states, regardless of their input. An aspiration to be part of the 'core Europe' coexists with a sense of inferiority in the field of European foreign affairs, mixed with a fear of the re-incarnation of the Western abandonment of Eastern Europe at the end of World War II (see Sjursen, 1999: 42), discernible in an inherent angst of betrayal of Baltic interests in the Union's relations with Russia. What we see, then, is the permeation of the 'Europe but not Europe' metaphor that has been emblematic of Eastern Europe in the post-Cold War enlargement discourses of the EU and NATO (Kuus, 2004) into the Baltic states' self-conceptualization and self-positioning in the field of common European foreign policy. The intriguing aspect of the re-emergence of this paradoxical categorization lies in its implicit self-imposition by its former 'objects' – the Baltic states – themselves. Having fought relentlessly against being designated as what was perceived as 'second-category Europeans' throughout their post-Cold War *Drang nach Westen*, the Baltic states' post-EU accession foreign policy discourse reveals the constitutive imprint that the 'Europe but not Europe' experience has actually left on their current security imaginary.

Nevertheless, an early warning about the potentially backfiring impact of the 'othering' treatment in the course of the EU enlargement on the post-accession behaviour of the East European states was given already in 1999 by Toomas Hendrik Ilves, then foreign minister of Estonia (Ilves, 1999). Ilves has, indeed, been notoriously open and persistent about criticizing the Western categorization of Eastern Europe as not fully European throughout his tenure as Estonian foreign minister (1996–98 and 1999–2002), resorting on several occasions to the words of a former president of the European Parliament as an example of this attitude, namely that 'the citizens and the politicians of the Central and Eastern European countries differ fundamentally from those in the present EU Member States as regards their national emotional traditions, experiences, interests and value judgements' (quoted in Ilves, 2001). Subsequently, he has also criticized the widespread impression of the teleologicality of the EU enlargement and the inclusion of the Baltic states in particular (see Arnswald, 2000: 21–27).[6] After all, 'nobody has been waiting for us in Europe for 800 years. We can always beat the drum that "we have always belonged to Europe". But in reality this is not quite the case' (Ilves, 2003b). Therefore,

> Estonia's accession to the EU signifies our liberation from the status of the second-class people, a status under which we have suffered since the 13th century as pagans, slaves and lower-class boors; as unwanted people; as *eine kleine Diebesvolk* (as an 18th-century encyclopedia characterized the Estonians); as East Europeans and former Soviets; as miserable cheap labour. (Ilves, 2003b)

[6] Indeed, it is important to keep in mind that the politics of becoming is not the politics of realization of an essence or universal condition known in advance by 'reasonable people' (Connolly, 1999: 130), and should therefore not be reduced to a social logic.

On closer examination, the Baltic states' newly acquired 'we are the EU' discourse entails strong undercurrents of self-persuasion (see Hvostov, 2005a). A good illustration of this Orwellian doublethink is provided by a recent editorial of the Estonian daily *Postimees* (2005). While implying that Russia's humiliating behaviour vis-à-vis Estonia (that is, revoking the border treaty and denying the Estonian foreign minister a visa) is equivalent to Russia's taunting of the EU, the proclaimed 'we are the Union' narrative rather implies 'we should be the Union to the same extent as any other member-state'.[7] The cited editorial thus echoes a fundamental disappointment about the EU's common foreign policy towards Russia and the Union's consequent inability to stand up for the interests of its smaller and weaker member-states.

The most recent display of the Baltic states' fear of being 'sold out' to Russia by the EU has been put forward in the context of the German–Russian gas pipeline project that is constructed first and foremost as a security issue for the Baltic states (e.g. *Eesti Päevaleht*, 2005). Lithuania's President Valdas Adamkus (2005f) has bluntly called the pipeline agreement between Germany and Russia 'unethical', demanding an end to the EU's 'silent diplomacy' vis-à-vis Russia and emphasizing the need for a proactive formulation of the EU's Russia policy. In a similar vein, an Estonian MEP Tunne Kelam (2005e) has noted that 'the date of 8 September stands as a symbol of the separate relations between Russia and some larger Member States' (see also Kelam, 2005h). Even the metaphor of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact that was last brought to the surface during the debates over the extension of the EU–Russia Partnership and Co-operation Agreement to new members (see Raik & Palosaari, 2004: 33; Bahovski, 2005: 130) has been reanimated in the context of strategic energy security (e.g. Made, Tiit, 2005), echoing an immanent fear of a deal made above the heads of the Baltic states between Russia and individual EU members (see Ilves, 2004b), and thus an anxiety of being caught in the fork between Russia and the EU in the event of a disagreement or conflict.

At the same time, the delayed discontent with the German–Russian gas pipeline project epitomized for the Baltic states the precariousness of a foreign policy preoccupied with the past. As an Estonian columnist ironically remarked, the 'pact of the present' was simply dismissed in the Baltic states (busy discussing the implications of the Nazi–Soviet Pact of 1939) before the deal between Germany and Russia was already struck (Hvostov, 2005b). Altogether, as Ilves (2005d), the visionary pragmatic of Estonia's foreign policy, has argued, historical sufferings are not easily convertible to foreign policy instruments and their effects remain limited:

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[7] See Kelam (2004a, 2005b), Kalniete (2003, 2004) and Vīķe-Freiberga (2003) for further examples of the Baltic states' quest for equal treatment in the EU.

> Our suffering is our own business . . . nobody else cares about it except for us – just as nobody else besides the Poles cares about the mass murder in the Katyn forest. Finding justifications for our current behaviour . . . related to the injustice of the past and the remaking of it – doesn't help us. We need a modern 'narrative'. And if this is our belonging to the West, our being part of the West, we have to behave accordingly.

But is the 'modern narrative' more about 'being European' or, indeed, 'behaving like one'? After all, as Estonian defence scholar Erik Männik (2005: 52–53) has pointed out, Estonia has historically developed the ability to quickly emulate required behaviour while maintaining values that are not supportive of such behaviour. Renowned Estonian writer Jaan Kaplinski (2004a: 33) has criticized this typically post-colonial syndrome of being more interested in how one appears to the West than in what one is actually like:

> The Estonians, just as many other nations, have been taught to be ashamed of their difference, to hide it or to get rid of it. Western colonization planted a deep sense of inferiority into the Estonians that still lives on today.

Ilves's timely appeal for a modern narrative to guide Estonia's foreign policy in the enlarged Europe thus constitutes yet another attempt to break free from the 'Europe but not Europe' straitjacket while implicitly acknowledging the quiet infiltration of this paradoxical sense of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion into the foreign political thinking of Estonia.

One-Issue Countries

Striking a fair balance between 'being in the right and getting what you want' (quoted in Ilves, 1998) therefore continues to be a central challenge for the Baltic states in the enlarged EU foreign policy. What the Baltic states essentially want is to make the EU's 'needlessly naïve appeasement policy towards Russia' (Ilves, 2005a: 197) more realistic, 'in order to defend our national interests and to avoid a situation where we are made an item of trade or other states pursue their interests at our expense' (Paulauskas, 2004). Participating actively in the formulation and implementation of a consistent and forceful EU policy vis-à-vis Russia and shaping the Eastern dimension of the New Neighbourhood Policy are thus articulated as the key post-accession foreign policy goals for the Baltic states (Ilves, 2004a; Paulauskas, 2004). The need for a consensual, value-based foreign policy, rather than one driven by economic interests towards Russia, is unanimously emphasized (Paet, 2005a,b; Ojuland, 2004b; Estonian Government, 2004; Kalniete, 2004; Adamkus, 2005c,d), while the lack of coherence in the current EU policy towards Russia is harshly criticized (e.g., Ilves, 2005e; Kelam, 2005f).

Compared to the old member-states, the Baltic states take a considerably harder line towards Russia's democratic shortcomings (Zīle, 2004; Lands-

bergis, 2004c; European Parliament, 2004b, 2005d; Mikko, 2005b; Kelam, 2005d; see Emerson et al., 2005: 31), criticizing the EU's inability to convince Russia of the necessity to complete its democratic and market economy reforms as a precondition for further cooperation with the Union (Ojuland, 2004a). Latvian and Lithuanian MEPs have been particularly vocal about pointing out the undemocratic tendencies in Russia,[8] and in condemning the EU's double standards regarding democracy and human rights:

> EU standards mean the erosion of standards as principles. In many important cases it is difficult to conclude what has higher priority in our spectrum of common values: real respect for human rights or cheaper gas, gas that is likely to erode our principles and, in the end, Europe. To the repeated remarks of my colleagues that Russia is very important, my response is: yes, but the truth is more important (Landsbergis, 2005b).[9]

Revealing the 'historical truth' about the implications of World War II and the Soviet occupation of the Baltic states has indeed become one of the missions of the Baltic states' post-EU accession foreign policy (Paet, 2005a; see Made, Vahur, 2005: 104–106). Moreover, as suggested above, aiming at constructive relations with Russia and retaining a coherent and meaningful self-image simultaneously – or managing to achieve both aims of the American proverb referred to above, 'you can be in the right or you can get what you want' – touches the crux of the Baltic states' existential politics in the EU.

Although admitting that the past cannot be changed (Vīķe-Freiberga, 2003), the Baltic states with Latvia at the forefront have launched a vigorous campaign in the European arena in order to change a general aloofness towards their sufferings in the past that have been constitutive for the development of their post-Cold War identity/difference constellation vis-à-vis Russia. 'Being in the right' or refuting Russia's fabrications and propaganda about the record of World War II in the Baltic region therefore emerges as the backbone of the Baltic states' existential politics in the enlarged EU, as the unsettlement of the 'old energies, injuries, and differences' (see Connolly, 1999: 136) is threatening to rob them of what they define as their meaningful existence. Attempting to integrate their troubled past into a common European historical consciousness, as well as to gain EU support for influencing Russia to acknowledge its responsibility for the Soviet occupation and the crimes of the communist regime in the Baltic states, appears as a necessary phase in their politics of becoming European. In order to achieve membership in the EU and NATO, the Baltic states (as well as the other CEE countries) were asked to redefine their relationship towards Russia, to suppress their tendencies of

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[8] See, for example, Krasts (2005c); for a more diplomatic tone, see Paleckis (2005); for Lithuanian hardline criticism, see Landsbergis (2005a).

[9] Consider also Ilves (2004d): 'Democrats always try to find the Aristotelian golden mean, even in politics, but there is no middle ground between the truth and a lie, between democracy and its all too many opponents.'

negative othering vis-à-vis Russia. As William Connolly (1995: xvi) has suc-
cinctly observed, to redefine its relation to others, a constituency must also
modify the shape of its own identity. In order to indeed implement these
reformulations in an internalized, not merely an emulative, manner and to
succeed in placing a new identity in the political field, the old differences and
injuries embedded in the established identities must be first dealt with, the
'memory work' done, as 'there cannot be reconciliation without truth and
remembrance' (European Parliament, 2005c).

Part of the politics of memory of the Baltic states is a self-appointed mission
to remind Europe about the complexities of its own past:

> If one is listening to yet another patronizing lecture about how 'we, Europeans' have
> learned to solve all problems through negotiations and diplomacy, and why 'you, East
> Europeans' haven't done that, then the implicit answer at least in seven states is: diplo-
> macy and cooperation à la Munich 1938? Molotov–Ribbentrop 1939? Yalta 1945? Or
> Bosnia before military intervention? The recent history of East European states does not
> exactly provide many examples about solving international problems successfully via
> negotiations. East Europeans rather remember the brute force used against them if they
> tried to protest against anything; the diplomacy over their heads; and especially the
> silencing of Western Europe when the tanks rolled over the East Europeans. We would
> like to forget. But to imply . . . that our different outlook comes only from our immaturity
> is reprehensible (Ilves, 2003a).

After all, as Vīķe-Freiberga emphasizes, while the end of World War II meant
liberation for the West, it meant 'slavery, occupation, subjugation and
Stalinist terror' for the East (Vīke-Freiberga, 2005d; see also Vīķe-Freiberga,
2005a).

A clear case for integrating East European history into the collective histori-
cal memory of Europe is put forward by Estonian MEP Tunne Kelam (2005g):

> Poland is a symbol for Europe. . . . Solidarność has become part of our European iden-
> tity. We have an opportunity to decide on celebrating 31 August as a day of freedom and
> solidarity, but another date of European significance needs to be remembered.
> On 23 August, the date on which the Nazi–Soviet Pact was signed in 1939, we should
> commemorate the victims of both communism and Nazism. Only then will the famous
> slogan 'Never Again' also apply to the victims of communism.[10]

Baltic MEPs are vigorous in criticizing the imbalance of the EU's historical
approach that grants the victims of communism a 'second-class status'
(Kelam, 2005c), calling for a common European effort to urge Russia to assess
its own history and to apologize for the crimes of Soviet totalitarianism
(Vīķe-Freiberga, 2005c; Krasts, 2005b; Kuškis, 2005b; Landsbergis, 2005e). In
particular,

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[10] See also European Parliament (2005e), which calls for commemorating the effort of Solidarność and cele-
brating 31 August as the Day of Freedom and Solidarity ('in order to place it in the collective memory of
Europe').

Russia must acknowledge the occupation of the Baltic States. This would also make it possible to legally distinguish national minorities from immigrants, whose rights in Europe are regulated by entirely different laws or norms. . . . This is a subject on which Latvia has to listen to unfounded accusations by Russia. . . . [11] In order for us to be successful, it is important for the countries of the European Union to speak with one voice to Russia, and also to pull no punches in calling things by their real names (Vaidere, 2005; see also Vaidere, 2004).

After all, the Soviet occupation of the Baltic states is

a crime that has apparently been exposed, but the criminal has not been punished. Moreover, the criminal has not admitted any wrongdoing. How can we forgive when there has been no expression of regret or request for forgiveness? (Pabriks, 2005b).

Therefore, 'Russia must repay its moral debt to Europe – it must reassess, in a civilized and democratic way, its role in the tragic history of the last century' (Kalniete, 2004). Moreover, the ability to assess honestly and without reservation the dark spots of one's own history is regarded as an indicator of the maturity of a society and the level of its democracy, and the urging of Russia to deal with the controversies of its history thus a precondition for strengthening democracy in Europe as a whole (Pabriks, 2005a). Lithuanian MEP Vytautas Landsbergis (2005f), a true master of 'flowery rhetoric' – a skill that, according to British scholar Anatol Lieven (1993: 25), has seemingly been a vital precondition for becoming a nationalist politician or intellectual in post-Cold War Lithuania – has even called for a 'new special Nuremberg process or a special Hague Tribunal for Soviet war crimes and their perpetrators' (see also Landsbergis, 2004a; 2005a,c,d). As a general rule, however, Lithuania's plea for a balanced historical evaluation of the effects of World War II in Eastern Europe is presented in a considerably more reconciliatory tone than the one used by Latvian politicians:

Today we are not left utterly alone with our truth, our history and our conscience. Certainly, there are people who judge those events differently. Their judgement is their right and their choice based on their conscience and their personal experience. But I fear that a final overall judgement is altogether impossible (Adamkus, 2005a).

A larger ambition of the 'politics of memory' of the Baltic states lies in an aspiration to be the recollection of Europe's 'true essence', in order to help Europe to become 'more European' again (see Kaplinski, 2004b: 38). The outspoken president of Latvia, Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga (2005c), for instance, has called for the 'revival of the Europe of culture and the Europe of ethics', and the 'strengthening of the sense of brotherhood and the sense of community among Europeans'. In order to do that, she has emphasized the need to get beyond 'griping, whining, complaining and condemning', and to dream more courageously about 'what we would like to be, about what we would

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[11] For the other side of the story, see the interventions by a Latvian MEP of Russian origin, Tatjana Zhdanoka (2004a,b; 2005a,b).

like to become' (Vīķe-Freiberga, 2004b). Nevertheless, compared to Latvia's history-pregnant discourse and Estonia's rather sloganish 'action plan' in the EU, the government of Lithuania tends to have the most specific and future-oriented vision for pursuing its post-EU accession foreign policy of the Baltic Three.[12]

   All in all, awareness of the strategic disadvantages of having the reputation of existentially anxious 'one-issue countries' in the EU is gradually rising in the Baltic states (Ilves, 2005f,g; Liik, 2005), with calls being made to add 'colour, depth and dimensions to our image of Europe' (Lobjakas, 2005a,b). The Baltic states are thus making efforts to enlarge their field of action to include other topics besides Russia in their agenda for the European foreign policy. Their role in bringing to the EU what former Lithuanian defence minister Linas Linkevicius (2004) has called 'thinking East' has been most conspicuous. By way of supporting political and economic reforms in the new Eastern neighbour states of the European Union and encouraging their further integration with the Euro-Atlantic structures, the Baltic states and Poland have indeed been at the forefront of giving substance to the EU's New Neighbours Policy.

The Baltic States and the New Neighbours

The impact of the new members on EU foreign policy in general and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in particular has been most visible in the European Parliament (EP), as also Toomas Hendrik Ilves, currently the first vice-chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the EP has confirmed (Ilves, 2005c). Indeed, there are a number of prominent people from the new member-states in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the parliament of the enlarged EU who have clearly made a difference as regards constituting the 'Wider Europe' policy as a cornerstone of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the Union, and in particular, gaining EU-level support for fair elections in Ukraine last year. The lack of foreign affairs heavyweights from the old members consequently translated into an EP resolution that was much fiercer and more straightforward than would have been possible with the old EP (Ilves, 2005c). Altogether, the EP resolution on the situation in Ukraine after the manipulation of election results by the Kuchma regime was 'the strongest response by far on the part of any European institution, a response that was led by new member states' (Ilves, 2005a: 200).[13] Moreover, a shift in the emphasis towards stressing the centrality of the ENP issues (e.g. Paet, 2005a) instead of a strong transatlantic relationship that was sympto-

[12] See Lithuanian Government (2004a,b).
[13] See European Parliament (2005a).

matic of the immediate post-EU accession foreign policy discourse of the Baltic states (e.g. Vīķe-Freiberga, 2004a, 2005b; Ojuland, 2005; Paulauskas, 2004) has been more recent in the national foreign policy establishments of the Baltic Three. Therefore, the Baltic MEPs have truly formed the vanguard in designing the policies vis-à-vis the new neighbours of the enlarged EU.

Further enlargement of the Union is generally regarded as a mechanism for avoiding the creation of what Toomas Hendrik Ilves (2003c: 205) has succinctly called 'the Great Wall of Europe'. Shaping EU policy towards Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and Georgia is of particular importance to the Baltic states. Again, it is emphasized that these countries have the right to develop direct relations with the EU, and the 'special interests' of third countries – that is, Russia – must thus be rejected (Kalniete, 2004; Ilves, 2005f). As Russia's leading tendency towards its neighbours is 'antidemocratic and thirsting for revenge' (Pīks, 2004), the EU is called to rethink its 'ostrich-like policy' on Russia (Ilves, 2005b).

The EU policy towards post-Orange Revolution Ukraine has been seen as a touchstone for the old member-states about how seriously they actually take democracy on the EU's borders, as well as a litmus test for the new members about how credible they actually are in their endeavours in the ENP (Ilves, 2004c). The Baltic MEPs have been notably active in criticizing the fraudulent Ukrainian elections last year (e.g. Pīks, 2004), as well as calling for concrete deeds, not mere words, in order to open up the opportunity for Ukraine to join the EU (Krasts, 2004, 2005a; Kelam, 2004b, 2005a; Ilves, 2005b).

Last but not least, the Orange Revolution had strong emotional undertones for the Balts. Indeed, the election fraud in Ukraine was described as a 'déjà vu' of the sham elections in the Baltic states in 1940, and the subsequent mass protests as reminiscent of Solidarność in Gdansk and Warsaw, Charter 77 in Prague and the singing revolutions of the Baltic states (Ilves, 2004d).[14] As Eastern Europe is not 'finished business yet' (Adamkus, 2005b), it is considered to be the 'civic duty' of the Baltic states, as well as other new EU member-states, to take the lead in formulating, on the basis of their similar reforms in the recent past, a comprehensive policy for building open and democratic societies from Ukraine to Georgia (Adamkus, 2005b,c). After all, it is emphasized, making the vision of a free and democratic region from the Baltic to the Black Sea a reality is not of secondary importance to the democratization projects in the Middle East or Afghanistan (Adamkus, 2005b).

Adamkus (2005e) is indeed demonstrating an almost playful interest in proving to the EU that the Black Sea region can be attached to Europe – just as the Baltic region could. While European foreign and security policy vis-à-vis the Black Sea region has been 'passive and reactive', Europe has 'neither moral nor historical right to deny the nations in the Black Sea Region the possibility to share the same transatlantic institutions', and thus the Union

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[14] See also Landsbergis (2004b).

has a responsibility to bring these nations 'back to Europe, a part of cultural and Christian tradition of which they were from the time Mtskheta was built' (Adamkus, 2005g). In order to do that, what is needed is 'a roadmap', 'a broad European and transatlantic consensus on the strategic goals and policy actions in the Black Sea area' (Adamkus, 2005e), as well as on how to engage Russia in the region's processes (Adamkus, 2005d).[15]

The inefficiency of EU policy as regards strengthening democracy and guaranteeing civil and human rights in Belarus is also harshly criticized, and concrete support for democratic opposition forces in Belarus continuously called for (Pavilionis, 2004, 2005; Andrikienė, 2004a,b,c; Paleckis, 2004; Kuškis, 2005a,c). Somewhat paradoxically, however, against the backdrop of the Baltic MEPs' vigorous couching of the 'becoming European' process of the new Eastern neighbours, their discourse on Turkish EU membership is generally rather cautious (e.g. Savi, 2004; European Parliament, 2005f). Lithuanian MEP Laima Liucija Andrikienė (2004d) has argued outright for a privileged partnership with Turkey, instead of offering Turkey membership, hinting a warning about the potential long-term consequences of lowering the requirements of the Copenhagen criteria: 'Turkey today, maybe another Eurasian state tomorrow, for example Russia?'

Conclusion

The thrust of this article has been to argue for understanding the Baltic states' self-positioning in the EU foreign policy field through the lens of existential politics, conceived as the politics of seeking meaningful survival. While the immediate survival concerns of the Baltic states have been surpassed with their accession to the EU and NATO, their existential politics of becoming European has merely moved on to yet another level. In their post-EU accession foreign policies, the Baltic states deal mainly with the residuals of the 'Europe but not Europe' designation they have been experiencing throughout the eastwards enlargement processes of the EU and NATO. The Baltic Three, along with the rest of the CEE countries, have not been the 'radical other' within European identity formation, but rather the embodiment of the liminality in the European self-image, in the course of a perpetual politics of becoming 'more European'. As Merje Kuus (2004: 479) has shown, the re-inscription of otherness by the CEE countries themselves similarly works not as an absolute dichotomy of self and other, but as a more complex and con-

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[15] See Mikko (2005a) and Andrikienė (2005) for further discussion on Moldova; see also European Parliament (2005a). Regarding Georgia, see European Parliament (2004a), which expresses support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia, calling on the EU and the Presidency-in-Office to provide an EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus.

tingent pattern of degrees and shades of otherness. While Russia remains conventionally 'othered' and securitized by the Baltic states, attempts are being made concurrently to shift the European discursive borders further towards the new Eastern neighbours of the EU.

A central aim of this article has thus been listening more attentively to the voice of the 'margins, silences and bottom rungs' of international relations (see Enloe, 1996) – in this case, the Baltic states as they struggle between echoing the self-appointed and EU-designated expectations of what constitutes 'being European'. The empirical analysis confirms Wæver's (2002: 25) observation according to which a nation's or a state's vision of Europe has to be compatible with its vision of itself. The self-conceptualization of the Baltic states as victims of Russia's historical wrongdoings and European indifference has strong repercussions for their vision of the EU's foreign policy: the EU is placed in the position of owing a debt to the Baltic states, and persistent requests are consequently made to have Baltic claims accommodated within the common foreign policy of the Union.

As shown above, the politics of becoming simultaneously accommodates a series of negotiations about the contents of collective historical memory (see Berger, 2002: 83). The Baltic states' politics of becoming European is thus also their politics against forgetting, a quest for a more comprehensive understanding of the common European past and for a concordant foreign policy in the future.

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