The Routledge Handbook of East European Politics

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“The West, the East and the Rest”

Publication details

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Published online on: 14 Aug 2017

Accessed on: 13 Dec 2023

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“THE WEST, THE EAST AND THE REST”

The foreign policy orientations of Central Eastern European countries

Elsa Tulmets

Introduction

After over four decades of communist domination, Central Eastern European (CEE) countries have claimed their “return to Europe” through European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) accessions in the 1990s and 2000s (cf. Drulák 2001; Lindstrom 2003; Batt 2007; Tulmets 2009, 2014; Cadier 2012). Given CEE countries’ varied national histories, a thorough analysis of their foreign policies has to rely on older as well as more recent aspects of their nations’ external relations. Many CEE nations have gone through years of occupation or fights against occupation by Germany, Russia, and Sweden in the North and East, but also by the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires in the East and South. Only a few of them have been independent states in recent history, contrary to other European countries like France, Germany, the UK, or Spain, which claim long foreign policy traditions. The first part of the chapter will show how the past of each nation and country affects the way to analyse CEE countries’ external relations. Difficulties to draw on past foreign policy traditions and resources partly explain why the “modern” foreign policies of the CEE countries, as defined in the 1990s and 2000s, decided to focus on “the West”, “the East”, and sometimes “the rest”.

This chapter claims that theoretical approaches towards CEE country foreign policies are missing despite drastic empirical evolutions on this topic. In order to make the link between past analytical works and more recent ones on CEE countries’ foreign policies, one needs to not only rely on literature from foreign policy analysis (FPA), international relations (IR), and European Studies, but also from history and area studies. As a matter of fact, since the early 1990s, foreign policies were mainly studied by groups of experts in each of the CEE countries, but less in the Anglo-Saxon field of FPA (cf. Hill and Wong 2011; Baun and Marek 2013). It is mainly in IR and European Studies that CEE country foreign policies have been dealt with, although mainly through the perspective of EU and NATO accessions, thus focusing more on sectoral and technical negotiations and positions of the countries (cf. Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005; Bulmer and Lequesne 2004, 2012). However, history and area studies are instructive when approaching bilateral actions defined in the framework of national foreign policies (Kanet 1983; Sodaro and Wolchik 1983), mainly during and after EU and NATO accessions (Fawn 2003;
Batt 2007; Ehin and Berg 2009). It is indeed at this time that political priorities and historical obligations or path dependencies started to merge, but also sometimes to clash, thus explaining some of the continuities and contradictions in CEE foreign policies (cf. Tulmets 2012, 2014).

**Historical and intellectual developments on CEE foreign policies**

Analyses of the foreign policies of CEE countries are generally difficult to trace back to before the interwar period (1918–1939), which represents the only time in history where almost all CEE countries enjoyed sovereignty before the end of the Cold War. Only a few states, like Poland, the Czech Republic (in fact Bohemia), Lithuania, Hungary, and Romania may claim to have a long foreign policy past, though not always as a nation state, like the periods of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Czechoslovakia show. CEE countries’ foreign relations have therefore mainly been studied from the perspective of national awakening or nation-building (Kiss 2000). The focus on nationalism as a vital element of foreign policy formation was, however, generally avoided by specialists of FPA given the uneasy legacy of nationalism in Europe, which, for example, strongly contributed to justifying the Holocaust during the Second World War (cf. Prizel 1998; Kiss 2000: 82).

In comparison, a few authors have written about the foreign policies of CEE countries under communism (e.g. Sodaro and Wolchik 1983; Kanet, 1983; Marês 2001, 2007; Batt 2007; Zając and Zięba 2010), although here again, not all countries had a foreign policy. In practice, the foreign policy relations of communist countries varied from relative independence from Moscow, like in the case of ex-Yugoslavia or Romania, to inexistence, like for the Baltic states. Furthermore, like Kiss writes, the communist ideology and the Soviet Union were dominated by “denationalised regionalism” (Kiss 2000: 90). It was therefore more the official communist ideology which guided foreign policy than national feelings, thus explaining the development of relations with countries situated in Asia (like China and Vietnam), in Africa (like Angola, Egypt, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Zambia), and other places of the world (such as Cuba and Nicaragua) sharing a similar ideology. Analytical point of views, however, differ if one considers relations through the neo-realist perspective of military events, like the Cuban Missile Crisis (Allison 1971), which shows the importance of limited-rationalism in decision-making processes, or through the more liberal economic and cultural aspects, which highlight more exchange between actors, even between the countries of the two blocs (cf. Sodaro and Wolchik 1983: 20; Marês 2001).

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and of the Soviet Union in 1991 again opened up the expression of national discourses and actions as guidance of foreign policy. The Baltic states took the path of a peaceful independence process to regain their sovereignty in 1991, and Czechoslovakia divided into two states, the Czech and the Slovak republics, after the Velvet Revolution of 1992. Conflictual events and civil war, however, brought Yugoslavia to fall apart into several small states throughout the 1990s and 2000s (see Bieber in this volume). On the whole, despite dramatic events in ex-Yugoslavia, nationalist trends were rather successfully canalised in the 1990s and 2000s through multilateral structures designed by the international community. As a matter of fact, the accession to international organisations and regional structures, mainly NATO and the EU, represented one of the main foreign policy goals of all CEE states (see Webber and Dimitrova in this volume). It is therefore mainly in this perspective that CEE foreign policies were defined and studied after 1989, which explains academic focus on specific concepts linked to multilateralism, like Europeanisation and NATO-isation, and the neglect of more theoretical approaches from an FPA perspective. In the 1990s, however, part of the FPA literature on CEE drew on past reflections often coming from the interwar period, which cultivated the definition of new foreign policy identities.
New foreign policy identities and priorities

Academic and mainly “grey” literature developed exponentially in each of the CEE countries, and also partly abroad, to shape and analyse the new foreign policy priorities adopted after the events of 1989 and 1991 (cf. Hill and Reuben 2011; Drulák and Šabič 2012; Baun and Marek 2013; Tulmets 2014). They mainly served the purpose of accompanying reflections of policy makers who needed to draft new foreign policy orientations for governments looking for the support of “the West”: in all CEE states, accession to the EU and NATO was thus defined as the top priority. In a constructivist sense, the CEE states embraced the norms and values defended and promoted by the EU, which are democracy and human rights, the rule of law, an open market economy, and solidarity. They constructed a foreign policy identity oriented against a communist or Soviet past, which is particularly evident in Poland and the Baltic states (for example Longhurst and Zaborowski 2007; Made 2011), but also against the Yugoslavian past, like in Slovenia and to a lesser extent Croatia (Hansen 1996; Šabič and Brglez 2002; Lindstrom 2003). For several CEE states, Russia is still considered as the other against which national identity is being developed (cf. Ehin and Berg 2009; Made 2011). This also had an important impact on the definition of EU-Russia relations in the 2000s (Leonard and Popescu 2007; DeBardeleben 2008; Kanet 2009; Spruds 2009; Delcour 2011).

It is not possible to mention the many authors who contributed to redefine and suggest initial analyses of foreign policy in CEE states, but a few names are worth citing for some of these countries. In Poland, foreign policy orientations were defined in taking over some of the key ideas developed in the interwar period, like the ones of president General Józef Piłsudski and conservative politician Roman Dmowski, and also relied on the approach designed by Polish intellectuals in exile, like Jerzy Giedroyć, who conceived Polish foreign policy in a way that it could avoid being caught between Germany and Russia (Kuźniar 2008, 2009; Longhurst and Zaborowski 2007; Szczepanik 2011). Multilateralism, thus joining the EU, NATO, and other international organisations, is seen as an opportunity to escape such a situation, and to also work on “good neighbourly relations” with Germany and Russia, as well as with the Eastern neighbours, especially those where Polish minorities are present (Gerhardt 2007: 79; Kuźniar 2008).

In the Czech Republic, humanist ideas expressed during the interwar period, mainly those of the first Czechoslovak president Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, were taken over again to define the Czech foreign policy of the 1990s (Drulák 2005). Drawing on Václav Havel’s ideas, Czech foreign policy discourse mainly focuses on the promotion of human rights and democracy, a trend which was maintained throughout the years despite ongoing debates (cf. Weichsel 2007; Kořan 2007, 2007ff, 2010; Weiss 2011). In Hungary, foreign policy priorities of the 1990s reflected the need to compensate the trauma of the Trianon Treaty of 1920, which deprived Hungary of a large part of its territory and population. All strategies thus highlight the need to join the EU and NATO, alongside the development of an active policy towards Hungarian minorities mainly situated in Romania, Slovakia, Serbia and Ukraine, either through multilateral or bilateral channels (Kiss 2000, 2003; Andor 2000; Rácz 2011).

Romania, which, also declared accession to the EU and NATO as a core foreign policy priority, was active in shaping a policy in the Black Sea region, and in reinforcing its relations with Moldova. The fact that Bessarabia used to belong to Romania in the early twentieth century and that there is strong language proximity, launched passionate debates in the 1990s on the possibility of a unification of Moldova with Romania (Vogel 2002; Gallagher 2005; Angeleascu 2011). Slovenia represents an example of a country which first sought a clean break from its past by constructing the Balkan region and ex-Yugoslavia as its foreign policy other, then used its foreign policy in this region to be visible in EU and NATO policies (Kajnč 2011; Šabič and Brglez
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2002; Šabič and Burkowski 2002). Estonia, like Latvia and Lithuania, represents a good example of an ex-Soviet republic which managed to define a new foreign policy, initially separated from its Soviet past and Russia, and then in accordance with its international engagements (Ehin and Berg 2009; Kesa and Tulmets 2012). While some reflections on sovereignty were taken over from the interwar period, the core priorities of this small nation, which was almost always under foreign rule, were to integrate multilateral cooperation frameworks which would allow it to gain a voice on the European and international stages. The yearbook on Estonian foreign policy, which is edited each year since 2003 by the Estonian Foreign Policy Institute (cf. Kasekamp 1996ff), documents rather well evolutions and reflections on this country’s foreign policy priorities.

In the 1990s, CEE states had few opportunities to cooperate on foreign policy issues, as they were often in competition with each other. Some exceptions were the non-institutionalised Visegrád Group created in 1991 and institutional cooperation between the Baltic states, through which minimal coordination allowed the countries to enhance negotiation positions with the EU and NATO (Vykoukal et al. 2003; Kořan 2007; Cadier 2008; Dangerfield 2009; Tulmets 2014: 185ff.). The Visegrád Group, in particular, which was deemed to disappear once its advocacy role would be over, in fact remained after the CEE accession to Western institutions: its core purpose in the field of foreign policy became to support other countries in coming closer to the EU and NATO (Dangerfield 2009; Tulmets 2014: 185ff.). In the context of the 1990s and early 2000s, academic literature thus mainly focused on the adaptation processes which took place in each CEE country to come in line with the EU and NATO requirements.

A focus on Europeanisation and NATO-isation

During the EU and NATO accession processes, a large literature developed on the Europeanisation and NATO-isation of CEE states. In practice, the EU accession process focused on around thirty very detailed and technical chapters, the chapter on foreign policy being in fact dealt with rather quickly and without long negotiations. It mainly consisted of an alignment to EU foreign policy declarations and priorities, and a requirement to participate in EU’s development policy. On the EU side, core defence and security issues were considered to have been addressed within the framework of NATO accession, and other issues were negotiated in coordination with other organisations, like the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) regarding human rights and minority issues.

Several CEE authors focused in the 1990s and 2000s on changes in their country “on their road to the EU” (e.g. Kasekamp 1996ff; Ágh 1999; Andor 2000; Drulák 2001; Kajnč 2011). Some authors tried to theorise the process and described it as asymmetrical, therefore looking at all forms of legislative and institutional reforms which would be in conformity with the conditions posed by the EU at the political, socio-economic, and security levels (Linden 2002; Schimmelfennig 2003; Jacoby 2004; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005). The research agenda was mainly set by the work of Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2005), who applied the extensive literature on Europeanisation (Radaelli 2000; Caporaso, Green-Cowles and Risse 2001; Bulmer and Lequesne 2004/2012) and the IR debate on constructivism versus rationalism to the EU accession process. Studies along these lines therefore focused on the details of chapter negotiations and legislative reforms, thus opting mainly for an institutionalist approach of Europeanisation (Ágh 1999; Andor 2000; Jacoby 2004; Bulmer and Lequesne 2004/2012; Braun 2013; also Dimitrova in this volume).

Regarding NATO, Schimmelfennig (2003) and Jacoby (2004) formed the academic foundation which some scholars used to develop case studies linked to reforms and modernisation of foreign policy and armed forces (cf. Linden 2009). Several authors, however, focused on specific
moments where CEE country positions on issues related to NATO activities. These were, for example, the war in Kosovo (1999) and in Iraq (2003), which exemplified the CEE states’ will to show commitment towards NATO and sometimes also US foreign policy priorities (for example, Kasekamp 1996ff; Larrabee 2000; Kuźniar 2008, 2009; Kofan 2007ff; Zaborowski and Wojna 2011; also Webber in this volume). For example, the “letter of the eight” of 30 January of 2003 titled “Europe and America Must Stand United”, urging UN action against Saddam Hussein, and the letter of the Vilnius group of 5 February 2003, supporting an UN resolution asking Iraq to comply with its disarmament obligations, were signed among others by the Czech, Polish, and Hungarian governments. The latter demonstrated their alignment with the US approach of the war in Iraq, despite German and French opposition to it and intra-EU tensions around the issue (cf. Tulmets 2014: 66, 75). This prompted US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld to speak of a divided continent, thus of differences between “old Europe” and “new Europe”. The recognition of the independence of Kosovo in 2008 is a further divisive issue, as some CEE countries, like Romania and Slovakia, refused to recognise this country (Tulmets 2014: 161ff.).

The Europeanisation and NATO-isation approaches reveal useful to understand the role played by the EU and NATO in shaping some of the new foreign policy priorities of CEEs, like their support to further candidates to EU and NATO, and their will to promote their experience of transition and accession to these organisations (Balfour 2005; Bačer 2010; Tulmets 2014). They are also useful when one looks at the way EU institutions and practices, like participation in EU institutions (Kuus 2011; Ban 2013) and the preparation of EU presidencies (cf. Tulmets 2014), have impacted on the way coordination takes place on foreign policy issues within the EU and NATO. To some extent, these approaches contributed to theorise and legitimise part of the “grey” literature in FPA which accompanied the transition and accession processes led by policy makers. While some of the leading work insisted on the rationalist and constructivist aspects of EU and NATO accession (for example, Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005; Baun and Marek 2013), others clearly inscribed themselves in line with the constructivist agenda interested in the evolution of foreign policy identity (Hansen 1996; Fawn 2004; Fürst 2008; Drulák and Šabič 2012; Andrespoke and Kasekamp 2012), thus offering a different picture than classical FPA work on states of middle or small size had offered so far.

In fact, the core of the literature on Europeanisation and NATO-isation focused on the short-term approach needed to attest the capacity of candidates to fulfil the Copenhagen criteria, but implementation aspects were very often neglected, although it is at this level that one can judge the countries’ capacities to maintain sustainable changes. Work by Epstein and Sedelmeier (2008), Trauner (2009), Braun (2013), and others have shown, indeed, that reforms have not always been sustained in several policy fields. These findings are important, but foreign policy aspects were often barely mentioned, although a similar trend can be observed in this field: while a relative consensus among national political parties existed on foreign policy issues until EU and NATO accessions, this consensus often disappeared after accessions.

While a core aspect of CEE foreign policies remains the will to support further candidates to EU and NATO (Balfour et al. 2005; Bartovic and Král 2010; Zięba 2010; Balcer 2010; Tulmets 2014), foreign policy issues increasingly reveal different worldviews among CEE representatives. Several aspects of foreign policy, maybe the more problematic ones due to a “freezing” of old regional conflicts during the Cold War, were often set aside in academic work focusing on EU and NATO accessions, although they constitute salient issues to take into account in the future developments of CEE foreign policies. For example, the relations towards Russia and positions to adopt regarding conflictual events and frozen conflicts (energy issues, war in Georgia in 2008, in Ukraine in 2014, and Transnistria) often reveal divisive, not only among political parties, but also within political parties and, furthermore, among CEE states. The members of the Visegrád
Group, for example, strongly disagreed over Ukraine in 2014, although differences of views are common, and the objective of the Group is to reach consensus on such complex issues (Dostál 2015). In the context of the war in Syria and the migration crisis, the Visegrád countries have found a common ground again, but their strict positions regarding refugees and the protection of borders have become a divisive issue, this time, at the European level (Dostál 2015). One way to understand these differences thus consists in recasting foreign policy positions in the longer history of relations between CEE nations and Europe, but also between nations and sub-regional integration. Therefore, not only multilateral integration, but also the evolution of bilateral relations to specific strategic partners, like to France and Germany in the European Union, and to the US or Russia in general, remain interesting to explore.

**CEE foreign policies: an area in need of further exploration and developments**

As CEE countries are sometimes still perceived as a homogeneous bloc in the Western-led academic community, differences between national approaches are often downplayed in the analysis of CEE foreign policies. Difficulties to take decisions in an EU with a growing number of member states is in fact symptomatic and an expression of these various approaches (cf. Král and Pachta 2005). In practice, the foreign policy of Poland, the largest country in CEE, is often considered representative of CEE foreign policy by policy-makers and in EU decision-making processes.

The literature on EU and NATO accessions often neglects the differentiated engagement of CEE states in their commitments towards these communities, and also the different positions taken within the countries in the political, economic, and social levels. While “grey” literature is often prolific on salient topics, the academic literature is largely silent on the common positions and debates regarding events such as participation in the wars in the Western Balkans, Iraq, and Afghanistan, as well as the conflicts in Georgia and in Ukraine both at the national and multilateral levels. Common actions of CEE representatives, like their support to the Orange revolution in Ukraine, their presence in Tbilisi during the negotiation of the ceasefire with Russia, or their engagement in the Ukrainian Maidan movements of 2013–2014, are often better known than, for example, the divisions among political parties and the Czech population regarding the project of the missile defence shield (Hynek and Šťrtecký 2010) and the “pro-European” Polish reaction after the withdrawal of the US radar project. The redefinition of security approaches, of relations to Russia, as well as national reactions to conflicts like the one in Syria are also issues which will need to be better understood from an academic point of view when exploring the Western engagement with the CEE states, and where knowledge of history can be very useful.

New CEE foreign policy orientations defined towards “the East” and “the rest” of the world are, at the national and regional levels, still not well coordinated and also not documented sufficiently in academic research. Under Polish influence, the CEE countries indeed managed to shape part of EU foreign policy in Eastern Europe, but other countries like Slovenia and Hungary contributed to also put the Western Balkans high on the EU’s agenda. In general, all CEE states support further EU accession processes and closer relations with the Eastern countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), including the Eastern Partnership (EaP) inaugurated in 2009 (Copsey 2007; DeBardeleben 2008; Dangerfield 2009; contributions in Ehin and Berg 2009, and in Tulmets 2011, 2012; Cadier 2012; contributions in Baun and Marek 2013; also Korosteleva in this volume). Differences in the preferences in bilateral relations and the way the EU policy was influenced are, however, less researched. While it is generally known that some CEE states, like Poland, the Czech Republic, and Lithuania were key in the launching period of
the ENP and EaP (Natorski 2008; Copsey and Pomorska 2014), it is still less known which role representatives of these countries exactly played in the negotiations of the association agreements with Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia; the nature of economic relations with the EaP countries; and the depth of cultural and historical links with these countries. Some of the later aspects, however, started to be tackled through research which was initiated in the field of development policy and the way EU accession impacted on the definition of CEE bilateral and multilateral strategies.

The impact of accession, which required active participation by CEE states in EU development policy and democracy promotion towards other regions like Africa or Asia only recently started to be presented and explained by European and Anglo-Saxon academicians (Lightfoot 2010; Szczepanik 2011; Najílova 2011; Petrova 2011; Andrespoke and Kasekamp 2012; Timofejevs Henriksson 2013; Lightfoot and Horký-Hlucháň 2013; Lightfoot and Szent-Iványi 2014; Tulmets 2011, 2014). Beside the countries of the Western Balkans and EaP, Central Asia, some African countries with which political and economic relations are inherited from communist times (e.g. Egypt and Zambia), other countries like Vietnam and Myanmar in Asia, and Cuba are among key priority countries of CEE foreign assistance. Despite the increasing number of analyses which focus on CEE current duties in the field of development, there is still some space to explore, for example, the links between past and present activities. There are various ways to do so. Some of the publications mentioned earlier indeed started showing the role played by the communist past in the rediscovery of bilateral relations between former “ideological brothers” in the 1990s and especially 2000s. Others insisted rather on the way the issue of democracy promotion, through the export of a unique transition experience, has become an opportunity for CEE states to find their place in the Western community and to develop an original foreign policy (Petrova 2011; Kesa 2011). The constructivist literature on small states, which mainly developed in the field of FPA (e.g. Šabić and Bukowski 2002), also mentions that the accession of small states to multilateral frameworks, like the EU, NATO, or the UN, reinforced their foreign policy identity. Small CEE states thus became able to promote their own view in these structures (Kuus 2011) and to seize for themselves an international shape (Andrespoke and Kasekamp 2012).

The role of multilateral groups within the EU is also a topic which is still not sufficiently researched or known. Several authors already highlighted the lack of interest from the (Western European) research community for the Visegrád Group or its subsequent evolution, although there were several attempts from other CEE countries, like Slovenia and Romania, to define themselves as Central European states (Šabić and Brglez 2002; Vogel 2002; Kajnič 2011) and to join this attractive coordination framework (cf. Kofan 2007; Cadier 2008; Dangerfield 2009; Tulmets 2013, 2014; see also contributions in the Visegrád Revue). Little is also known about the evolution of cooperation between the Baltic states, the exact role of Romania and Bulgaria in the Black Sea region, or CEE positions on the independence of Kosovo (cf. Tulmets 2014). And although the Weimar Triangle (that is, France, Germany, and Poland) was prominent in the framework of mediation processes at the start of the war in Ukraine in March 2014, it is in search of new legitimacy since it was superseded by the Normandy format led by France and Germany in the following months. Many other informal coordination frameworks including CEE states nevertheless contribute to shape EU foreign policy, like the Groups of Friends of Georgia, of Ukraine, of the Eastern Partnership, and so forth which are also important to mention and to maybe study (cf. Fürst 2008; Kesa 2011).

The impact of external events on the foreign policy of CEE states and also on EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is interesting to take into account (Neuhold and Sucharipa 2003; Fürst 2008; Hill and Wong 2011), also in terms of new orientations regarding security and defence policies (Cadier 2008; Baun and Marek 2013). In the context of recent events, they tend to be tackled by authors producing
policy advice and “grey” literature, while more theoretical explanations of these developments are missing. The wars in Georgia and Ukraine, but also gas crises, are in fact important periods to consider in the evolution of the EU’s foreign policy and especially CEE security strategies. One needs to observe how events will develop in the future to identify longer explanatory trajectories beyond differential discourses and actions of successive CEE governments represented by different political parties or coalitions.

One notices that the war in Georgia prompted some CEE states, like Poland and the Czech Republic, to define new foreign policy strategies as well as to again prioritise their security and defence policies, beyond the aims to be more active in, and find ways for better dialogue between EU and NATO – as finally enshrined in the NATO summit declaration of Warsaw of 8–9 July 2016. The war in Ukraine even contributed to a reconfiguration of coalitions among CEE countries, with the Visegrád Group partly losing coherence and Poland coming much closer to the Baltic states in its critical assessment of the situation and its relations to Russia (Fuksiewicz and Łada 2015). It also prompted CEE states to ask for reassurance regarding NATO and the US concerning their territorial security and, as such, reveals the existence of different perceptions of threats and security conceptions among NATO members (Dostál 2015). Cooperation in the Visegrád format nevertheless reinforced again in the context of the migration crisis of summer 2015. All of these developments therefore open new avenues for research on CEE foreign policies, and require analysis of twenty-five years of activity. This necessitates to adapt FPA tools developed so far for “Western” countries or at least to consider the role of the CEE past in a different way than for nation states which can rely on longer foreign policy traditions (Baun and Marek 2013; Tulmets 2011, 2014). In this context, it is for example particularly useful to link these research fields with IR traditions highlighting the role of culture, history, and identity in foreign policy and world politics (Katzenstein 1996; Hansen 1996; Hudson 1997; Prizel 1998; Drulák 2001; Kiss 2003; Ehin and Berg 2009; Tulmets 2014).

**Conclusion**

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and of the Soviet Union in 1991, the CEEs focused on their “return to Europe”, thus to “the West”, while relegating their relations to the East as belonging to the past. Once their EU and NATO integrations were accepted, they started defining new foreign policy priorities and mainly oriented them towards the “East”, thus post-communist or still communist countries. Given their engagement in international structures, they also defined approaches for “the rest” of the world, focusing on key countries and regions for the EU and NATO (such as Afghanistan and the Middle-East) and including other regions like Asia and Africa in their foreign development strategies.

Despite these changes, comparative academic work remained rather scarce and there is a growing need to better conceptualise CEE foreign policies. Interestingly, one has seen for several years the publication of yearbooks which is a sign of this will to list priorities, but also, over time, to have a more analytical approach of CEE foreign policies (e.g. Kasekamp 1996ff; Zaborowski and Wojna 2011; Kofan 2007ff). There is therefore some space for the development of comparative research in this field, which necessitates crossing different approaches and insights coming from FPA, IR, European Studies, but also history and area studies. This way, one may hope for a normalisation of the analysis of CEE foreign policies, maybe along other analytical lines which would show that there is no “old” and “new” Europe, but rather foreign policy positions and networks which evolve less through an East/West than a North/South divide, and more according to the issues studied.
“The West, the East and the rest”

Notes

1 I would like to thank the editors of the book and a lector for their excellent comments and edition suggestions. I also thank the IIR in Prague and Palgrave MacMillan for allowing me to draw on some ideas and sentences from Tulmets (2012, 2014).

2 “Grey” literature generally refers to publications coming from outside traditional academic channels. It includes government reports, white papers, as well as think tank and civil society organisation analyses and studies.

3 According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, Bessarabia is a “region in eastern Europe that passed successively, from the 15th to 20th century, to Moldovia, the Ottoman Empire, Russia, Romania, the Soviet Union, and Ukraine and Moldova. It is bounded by the Prut River on the west, the Dniester River on the north and east, the Black Sea on the southeast, and the Chilia arm of the Danube River delta on the south”. (www.britannica.com/place/Bessarabia, accessed 30 August 2016)

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