1. **Introduction**

The evolution of the EC/EU as a new political system in the 20\textsuperscript{th} and 21\textsuperscript{st} century and the continuous deepening and extension of its institutional structures and policies continues to pose fundamental questions both to academics and practitioners in the field. However, it remains unclear how exactly the terms “deepening” and “widening” should be defined and used in the work context of EU-CONSENT. Furthermore, a – multi-disciplinary – conceptualisation of the interrelation between “deepening” and “widening” is still lacking.

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1 I am very grateful to the participants of the third meeting of WP “Theories” in Brussels on Oct 12\textsuperscript{th}, 2006 for their valuable and constructive comments and suggestions. Some more fundamental issues discussed in this meeting will be included in greater detail in a revised version of the paper towards the end of 2006.
As outlined in an earlier paper prepared for EU-CONSENT,² “deepening” and “widening” have represented the two central points of reference likewise for debates on the future construction of Europe and for the European Community’s – and later the European Union’s – agenda itself. “Deepening” and “widening” have proven to constitute a dual force propelling the process of European integration forward. They may, however, have come under considerable strain recently – or may even have turned into two antagonistic poles for the future development of the EU. Reconciling the processes of “deepening” and “widening” after the 2005 ratification failure of the Constitutional Treaty may thus call for other than the established European bargaining techniques of package deals, opt-outs or side-payments. Instead, more fundamental political choices might have to be made, carefully weighing up the risks and benefits of different scenarios and strategies for the Union’s future development. The political preferences and strategies of the relevant political actors as well as the public’s consent will be crucial in this regard.

As discussed previously, the general term “deepening” could, as a starting point for the work context of EU-CONSENT, be defined as a process of “gradual and formal vertical institutionalisation” (Schimmelpfennig/Sedelmeier 2002: 502). “Widening”, on the other hand, could be defined as a “process of gradual and formal horizontal institutionalization” (Schimmelpfennig/Sedelmeier 2002: 502). However, the process of European integration encompasses a multitude of different dimensions, the most prominent of which are the historical, the political, the economic, the attitudinal (or sociological) and the judicial dimension. “Deepening” and “widening” continue to have distinct meanings within as well as for these different dimensions of European integration, all of which are reflected in the diverse theoretical approaches and analyses of European integration provided by their corresponding academic disciplines.

This paper sets out to briefly summarise the current core questions within these academic disciplines and outline their approach to the twin process of EU deepening and widening. First findings and preliminary answers, but also gaps and shortcomings in the debate will be presented. Even this very short summary will illustrate to what a considerable extent the questions addressed and the methodological and theoretical approaches applied currently differ among these academic disciplines. However, the process of European integration is not only multi-dimensional in itself, but may also lead to divergent scenarios in different dimensions of the integration process.

² See Faber/Wessels 2006: “Wider Europe, Deeper Integration? Theoretical considerations for analysing the ‘lessons of the past’ and strategies for the future of the EU: Trends and turns. Revisited background paper on the project’s theoretical and methodological framework including sets of expectations and yardsticks with indicators (D6)”, March 2006.
The overall aim of the paper is to exploit the potential for cross-disciplinary research questions. To this end, the paper will conclude by presenting a set of six tentative (hypo)theses on the systematic, multi-dimensional effects of enlargement. These (hypo)theses could serve as starting points for the development of an inter-disciplinary theoretical framework on the evolution of the European polity.

2. **EU deepening and widening from a historical perspective**

In historical analyses of European integration, research has so far focused on competing ideas and concepts for establishing European unity (“ideas of Europe”) and on analysing the reasons and motives which led national governments to cede sovereignty to the European level. Special attention has been paid to the role of the Franco-German “tandem” (see Laurent 1994; Loth 2001: 92f).

Although several contributions have been made to the analysis of the empirical process of enlargement,3 “widening” has so far not been a central issue in the field of research on the history of European integration. This means that systematic historical research on the effects of five successive enlargement rounds has only just begun and is now beginning to offer the first results on the “community’s quest for completion, deepening and enlargement” (Loth 2006) since 1969 (see the contributions to the Journal of European Integration History 2005, Vol. 11, No. 2).

These first results illustrate the multifaceted picture of European integration in the 1970s with special regard to the Community’s external projection in the 1970s on (potential) candidate and third countries (EC-US relations). Furthermore, a series of attempts to deepen the integration process from the late 1960s onwards (institutional reform, foreign and defence policy and initiatives within different community policies such as the Common Agricultural Policy) have been scrutinised.

The general conclusions which can be drawn from these analyses are first of all that the deepening of the EC/EU proceeds in steps and intervals and in constant interaction with the EC’s/EU’s external environment (Loth 2006: 5ff). Secondly, even in times when there seems to be no qualitative “leap” in the development of the integration process, pragmatic and consensual solutions to common institutional and political problems may be discussed and agreed upon. These solutions may then pave the way for the next wave of more substantial and fundamental reform projects. Thus, there are no “pitch dark” ages in the integration process to date, but rather an alternation of phases of constructive, smaller pragmatic steps with periods of faster and more fundamental change, with the latter reaping the results of the former.

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However, the development of theoretical approaches to European integration does not represent the primary ambition of historical analyses. Rather, historians try to contribute to the assessment of the validity of existing theories. In order to do so, they look for historical facts and proofs which support or contradict the arguments of existing theoretical schools (Loth 2001: 87f). Thus, the historians’ approach may be characterised as a fundamentally empirical one.

3. The puzzle of EU deepening and widening in political science

In contrast to this more empirical approach of historians, political scientists have been searching for generalisable insights and systematic theoretical approaches to the process of European integration since the late 1950s. However, theoretical approaches provided by political scientists have to date contributed very little to the analysis and understanding of the particular interrelation between deepening and widening: “Scholarship is far from having developed anything like a comprehensive ‘theory’ to enable us to understand the all-embracing nature and impact of EU enlargement” (Miles 2004: 264). Especially regarding empirical-analytical theories, the effects of enlargement and the interactions between EU widening and deepening continue to represent a “blind spot” (Schimmelpfennig/Sedelmeier 2002) in integration theory. Enlargement has simply either been treated as a proof for the validity of neo-functionalists’ (geographical) spill-over-hypothesis (Haas 1958), as a general proof for the success of European (economic) integration or has been ignored altogether.

Some of the few exceptions to this rule are Miles/Redmond/Schwok (1995), who tried to assess the implications of past and future enlargements on European integration theory and vice versa. Enlargement, according to them, enhanced the intergovernmental tendencies within the EU. The EU became more diverse and heterogeneous regarding the interests, the nature and configuration, the economic situation and the ideological perspectives of its member states. In contradiction to the arguments made by Miles, Redmond and Schwok, Falkner (1996) stated that these conclusions were not fully justified. Instead, she concluded that enlargement would necessarily entail far-reaching institutional reforms within the EU, further limiting the national autonomy and sovereignty of old and new member states alike.

However, as Miles and Redmond more pointedly stated in 1996, the “deepening” of the EU in terms of a federalisation of the system may have come under severe pressure due to the five successive enlargement rounds of the EC/EU since 1973 (see Miles/Redmond 1996).

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4 See the detailed assessment of neofunctionalism, liberal intergovernmentalism, multi-level governance, new institutionalism and constructivism regarding the respective “usefulness” of these approaches for the analysis and explanation of EU enlargement provided by Miles (2004).
Certainly an increase in the number of member states does not automatically entail a higher level of complexity and heterogeneity in EU decision-making. Rather than depending on the total number of acceding states, rising heterogeneity is caused by divergent interests and new identities coming into the Union. Thus, a greater number of new member states with interests parallel to ones already represented within the EU may simply be absorbed by the Union, whereas just one new member state may, subject to its aims, interests and voting behaviour, cause a substantial disruption of the existing decision-making procedures and well-established bargaining mechanisms. Therefore the conditions under which a rising number of member states causes a rise in the Union’s heterogeneity and complexity need to be addressed more explicitly and concretely.

The (top-down) effects of enlargement – or rather the effects of accession – on new member states have been addressed by the fast growing body of Europeanization literature. Some insights may also be gained from the literature on treaty negotiations and the intergovernmental conferences of the 1990s. On the other hand, the (bottom-up) effects of enlargement(s) on the horizontal level of the European polity remain largely unexplored. Furthermore, the predominance of single-case studies in all existing analyses still prevents generalisable conclusions with regard to the effects of enlargement(s) in political science (see Schimmelpfennig/Sedelmeier 2002: 507ff; 524).

In recent debates on EU deepening and widening, two core questions have arisen. The first of these asks (once again) what kind of a political order the EU represents, and what might be the most likely scenarios for its future development after the ratification failure of the Constitutional Treaty. Here, a variety of greatly differing analyses of the Union’s political “state of the art” and, following from them, different “prescriptions” for its future development have been presented. Among those are Bartolini’s (2005) and Münkler’s (2005) characterisations of the EU as a new state-building exercise, representing a new form of statehood or “imperium” and/or leading to the dissolution of the “traditional” nation state. In that context, Bartolini recommends territorialisation, i.e. a firm definition of the EU’s geographical borders and membership boundaries, in order to allow for the emergence of

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6 See in particular Moravcsik 1998: The Choice for Europe. Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht. The liberal intergovernmentalist approach to European studies has largely been dominated by Moravcsik, who has drawn on international relations theory (and here mainly Keohane’s and Nye’s Interdependence approach) to explain European integration. For an earlier but decisive text see Moravcsik 1993: Preferences and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach. For a more recent publication dealing specifically with the phenomenon of widening see Moravcsik/Vachudova 2003: National Interests, State Power and EU Enlargement.
7 Though a more recent overview of developments in the field of Europeanization studies by Radaelli (2004) recognises a shift away from a static top-down approach towards a more dynamic perspective with scholars now paying more attention to the reciprocal effects and the interactive logic of Europeanization.
8 See the extensive survey presented by Laffan/Sudbery 2006, which summarises the positions currently taken by Moravcsik, Hix, Olsen and Bartolini.
political structuring and thus of a new type of an “enlarged” European “state”. Moravcsik (2006), on the other hand, argues that the EU has reached a state of a stable institutional and political equilibrium which does not necessitate any further deepening, but may allow for further enlargement(s) – provided that this is in the interest of the member states. Follesdal and Hix (2005) finally completely disagree with Moravcsik’s conclusion and instead call for the politicization and democratization of the EU’s decision-making procedures and institutional structures in order to guarantee for a more stable and sustainable legitimacy basis of the Union.

The second set of questions refers to the “logic of the international system” and its effects on the evolution of European integration. Here, the core question – once again – is how the effects of changes and developments in the EU’s external environment on the development path of European integration could be analysed and integrated systematically into a theoretical model.9 In the current literature, the conclusion that global political developments like e.g. the Cold War or the political economy have greatly influenced, if not caused both deepening and widening of the European polity in a great number of instances, represents a truism. However, the different external causes for widening and deepening and their effects on EU system building remain uncategorized and unexplored. Thus, the present theoretical debate in political science still lacks a conceptualisation of the role played by the EU’s external environment - even though these factors have been major sources for further deepening and widening and should thus explicitly be included: “[An] analysis of deepening and widening must be accompanied by a contextualisation of global forces” (Laffan 2006: 7).

4. Economic theoretical approaches to EU deepening and widening
A wide range of subjects regarding the deepening and the enlargement of the EC/EU has been covered by general economical theoretical approaches, focussing on negative integration (i.e. the abolishment of national barriers to trade) as well as on positive integration (i.e. the setting up of new common institutions and regulations). The most prominent theoretical schools are the theory of optimum currency areas, theories of monetary integration and the theory of trade creation and trade diversion.

Traditionally, the guiding questions for economic research on the EU have been related to the net gains of international trade for specific countries or have tried to analyse whether a country should open or to protect its market, labour force and capital. Furthermore, the (more political) question of how gains from international integration should be distributed within an integrated area has been scrutinised (see Kösters/Beckmann/Hebler 2001: 36). Following a period during which theoreticians had been sceptical about the advantages of regional

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9 One of the few works on this issue is represented by Zimmerling (1991).
economic integration, the “economic profession recognizes now, maybe with a delay of several decades over their political science colleagues, that discriminatory trading arrangements tend to be welfare-increasing provided they are regionally based and fairly open to new membership” (Tovias 1994: 57). In this context, the process of adding new member states to the EC/EU has been regarded as “increasingly closing the EU to the outside world” (Tovias 1994: 74); but also been analysed under a broader range of aspects such as e.g. the dynamics and the effects of an extension of the Eurozone to new member states.

During the past years, more specific questions regarding the economic state of the enlarged EU have (re-)appeared on the research agenda. They focus predominantly on the analysis of the effects of the Lisbon agenda on the European economic space and the competitiveness of the EU with special attention to the development of new technologies and lifelong learning. Furthermore, questions regarding the composition of the next EU budget (2007-2013) are being debated. Here, two aspects are predominant: 1. the need of a reduction of expenses on the Common Agricultural Policy in order to rise the share of expenditures on research and technology in return, and 2. the indispensable reform of the budget, aiming at the abolition of special clauses, exceptions and rebate mechanisms and at the rise of the share of the EU’s own resources.10 Last but not least, a number of publications have, since the early 1990s, focused on re-distributive and social questions in the wake of the completion of the Single Market until Dec 31st, 1992. All of these more recent debates point to the fact that economic integration should not per se be regarded as an apolitical or even antipolitical dimension of the integration process. Rather, economic integration entails a series of political and social choices and decisions and should thus be included as fundamental issues in any political debate on the future course of integration.11

However, the analysis of the specific impact of an ever larger union on the internal (distributive) and the external (trade) effects of European economic and monetary integration have so far not yielded more systematic and coherent approaches which could help to assess the consequences of EU widening on EU deepening and/or vice-versa.

5. **EU deepening and widening from a legal perspective**

Last but not least, the extensive legal literature on the process of European integration has focused on questions concerning (the erosion of) statehood, on the creation and the core elements of a (European) constitution, on the fragmentarisation and Europeanisation of

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10 See e.g. Ardy 2000: EU enlargement and agriculture, Begg 2004: The EU Budget: Common Future or Stuck in the Past?, and Begg/Heinemann 2006: New Budget, old dilemmas. See also the extensive communication by the Commission of the European Communities to the Council 2004, presenting a thorough assessment of the challenges of enlargement and the resulting need for reform.

11 A scholar who has dealt with this entailment extensively is Loukas Tsoukalas (see Tsoukalas 2003: What kind of Europe?).
national law under the conditions of “direct effect” and “supremacy” of Community law, on the role of the European Court of Justice and on the finalité and the legitimacy of the process of European integration (see Easson 1994; von Bogdandy 2001). However, especially the focus on the “constitutionalisation” of the Treaty on European Union (Nice Treaty) still omits a set of fundamental questions regarding the future development of European integration, because it ignores the effects and changes induced by enlargement. How should the increasing legal and judicial diversity in the enlarging EU be handled in a way that safeguards a stable common legal framework? What does it mean for the existing legal and constitutional orders of old and new member states alike if the Constitutional Treaty does enter into force? Has the role and importance of the European Court of Justice been strengthened or weakened by enlargements? What role does the “implementation gap” in both old and new member states play with regard to safeguarding a common European legal framework (see Hofmann/Rovna 2006)? In what way is legal and constitutional heterogeneity within the EU reflected in concepts for establishing a (Federal) European Republic? And how could the concept of a “European citizenship” be defined within a Union of 25(+) member states?

This wide range of issues and questions with regard to EU widening has so far been neglected by current legal research. However, as stated for the other disciplines, a more systematic approach to the impact of past enlargement rounds on the functioning of the EU’s legal structure and on the constitutional quality of its treaties is indispensable in order to compare and assess the validity of alternative strategies and scenarios for the Union’s future development.

6. Sociological contributions to the analysis of EU deepening and widening

Similarly, within the attitudinal (or sociological) dimension of EU, the effects of five successive enlargement rounds have not been at the centre of analysis so far. Instead, sociological research on European integration has focused first of all on an explanation for the present state of integration and secondly on an assessment of the prospects for political unification (see Feld 1994: 43; Bach 2001).

To this end, concepts such as “communication” and “transactions”, “learning” and “values”, “political culture” and “European public sphere” have been analysed with regard to the question: Under which conditions could “political unification” be achieved in the European Community/European Union and a “European identity” be established? However, under the changed circumstances in a union of 25(+) member states, these questions need to be reconsidered and emphasised, since enlargement has undoubtedly presented one of the major independent variables of change within the attitudinal (or sociological) dimension of European integration. Especially after the ratification failure of the Constitutional Treaty in
2005, the issue of identity-building on the European level has once again gained new salience and significance.

In this respect, the more recent literature on Europeanization (though far from being limited to these aspects) and the literature on the creation of a European public sphere\textsuperscript{12} have contributed substantially to the understanding of processes of adaptation, assimilation and change as well as of the preconditions for successful identity-building in both old and new member states. A great variety of issues and processes have been analysed in this regard such as e.g. the “Europeanization” of political and administrative structures in the new member states (see Rovna 2006), the preconditions and dynamics of the successful establishment of a European foreign policy in an EU-25 (+) (see Agh 2006) or the state and the problems of the societies in the new member states.

However, the focus which is very often on single-case or single-country studies offers too little potential for cross-national comparisons and generalisable conclusions. Furthermore, the top-down perspective which dominates especially within the Europeanization literature has not yet generated sufficient insights into feedback processes on the European level, horizontal dynamics of change and identity-building.

7. Conclusion: Six tentative (hypo)theses on EU deepening and widening

The previous summary of different theoretical and methodological approaches to EU deepening and widening has illustrated the multi-faceted nature of both “deepening” and “widening” in past and present times. The main conclusion to be drawn from this multi-faceted picture of European integration is that any debate on alternative strategies and scenarios for the future of the EU will first of all have to be disaggregated in order to reflect the multi-dimensional character of the integration process. Furthermore, it may also be sensible to distinguish between different phases of European integration when analysing the “lessons of the past”. The variety and diversity of current research questions and theoretical concepts within the different academic disciplines, but also the gaps and blind spots have become evident.

However, the aim and ambition of this paper has been to exploit the potential for cross-disciplinary or even inter-disciplinary research questions in order to contribute to a more systematic analysis of projects and dimensions which have become interconnected in the course of European integration. A number of fundamental methodological questions with regard to that ambition remain unresolved:

- Is it actually possible and valid to compare the enlargements rounds to date?

\textsuperscript{12} Including proposals e.g. for the establishment of an independent, truly European news agency located in Brussels.
- How will it be possible to establish causal relationships between deepening and widening?, that means:
- What methodology and criteria should be used to determine which changes in the EU’s scope and level are effectively and directly attributable to (previous or approaching) enlargement rounds (and vice-versa)?
- How will it be possible to prevent a confusion of congruency (or simultaneity) with causality?
- How can “change” in general be measured when the EU as such is by definition in a constant process of change and evolution with no fixed finalité?

These questions will have to be addressed and resolved step-by-step in future analyses. Furthermore, indicators for change or vectors of change will have to be elaborated and defined against the background of the respective disciplinary expertise.

Due to the lack of systematic theorising in the field, it is not possible to establish hypotheses and sets of independent variables on the interrelationship between deepening and widening in a purely deductive way. Instead, a combination of deductive and inductive methods has to be used. The remaining section of the paper will therefore set out six tentative, both inductive and deductive (hypo)theses on the systematic effects and characteristics of enlargement. These (hypo)theses are linked to the different thematic dimensions outlined above and may serve as starting points for an inter-disciplinary theoretical framework on the evolution of the European polity.

I. **Enlargements do not entail “big bangs” in the integration process, but strengthen existing dynamics, characteristics and projects within the EU in a path-dependent manner.**

In general, those dynamics and projects are strengthened which correspond with the dominant conceptions of Europe in the new member states. Thus, an analysis of the domestic political structure and of the policy preferences of the acceding states is indispensable to an understanding and an assessment of the potential effects of each enlargement round on the EU’s political order and policies. Factors such as the size, the state, the structure and the competitive position of the new members’ national economies, the divergence or convergence of the economic development and interests within old and new member states and the political structures and political cleavages within the acceding countries certainly contribute a great deal towards explaining the effects of an enlargement round on the further development of European integration. Furthermore, the power relations between acceding countries co-determine which dynamics and projects within the Union will most likely come to the fore.
Different enlargement rounds therefore have had very different effects on the deepening of the integration process, but none of them has been disruptive. Instead of introducing dramatic changes, subtle and much more diffuse effects have been observable.

II. The effects of enlargement are co-determined by the timing of the accession of new member states.

Enlargements proceed in different stages, and the effects of each enlargement round vary depending on the timing of an accession process (Goetz 2006). This means that the nature and state of the EU’s political order at the time of enlargement; i.e. the scope and level of the *acquis communautaire* and the scope and level of institutionalisation and politicisation within the EU co-determine the concrete process and the effects of a distinct enlargement round. Furthermore, the size of the EU at the time of enlargement as well as the number of the acceding countries influence the course of the enlargement process and the effects it has on the EU’s polity.

Thus, an analysis of the state and nature of the EU’s political order at the time when accession negotiations are opened is indispensable for understanding and explaining the potential effects of the following enlargement.

III. Enlargement privileges economic integration projects over political ones.

To date, five successive enlargement rounds have run parallel to the remarkable completion of the Single Market and the establishment of the Economic and Monetary Union. Thus, enlargements seem to have facilitated integration projects in the economic sector, where costs and benefits have been more easily calculable for the member states. Moreover, “negative” integration projects aiming at the abolition of barriers and regulations seem to have been privileged by enlargements. On the contrary, integration projects in the political and identity sphere have encountered rising difficulties after each enlargement round. This does not mean that the process of European integration should be read as a purely economic project, since there have always been a wide range of “political” integration projects. Furthermore, there have been differences between enlargement rounds with regard to the political ambitions of the EC/EU during and after enlargement.

However, “rational” or rationally calculable projects which allow member states to predict potential net gains and losses with a high degree of certainty seem to have been privileged by enlargements due to the inherent “logic” of different integration projects (Busch 1998).

IV. Enlargement changes the distribution of power between institutional actors both on the horizontal and on the vertical level, leading to a highly complex system of interlocking powers and responsibilities.

Enlargement has lead to an extension and pre-eminence of consensus-oriented and inclusive decision-making procedures, systematically involving an ever rising number of
(institutional) actors both on the European level and within the member states especially in the area of intergovernmental decision-making. In the area of supranational decision-making, the European Parliament (EP) has experienced a remarkable increase in its formal co-decision power and informal influence on agenda-setting. Thus, today’s Union may be characterised as a “very coincidental compromise” (Loth 2006: 7), which is far from a consistent institutional design.

This sometimes haphazard development may, however, soon prove to be a dead-end street, since the Union more than ever lacks a clearly defined, single centre of power and responsibility. Instead, the new policy-making techniques which have been introduced since the 1990s like e.g. the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) have further contributed to a highly complex and intransparent system of shared responsibilities and checks and balances, potentially leading into a “joint decision trap” (Scharpf 1999) and making the system incomprehensible for the citizens.

V. Enlargement emphasizes the role and importance of a common and uniform legal framework for the smooth continuation of the integration process.

With each enlargement, the role of the European Court of Justice and the system of judicial review of the common legal framework has grown. Thus, “hard law” has more and more turned into the stabilising basis for negotiations in the Council of Ministers and the COREPER. Primary and secondary law have to a certain extent replaced the often mentioned logic of “socialisation” of actors within the EU, providing a reliable common starting point and a framework of reference in an increasingly complex, heterogeneous and thus insecure bargaining environment. However, agreeing upon new “hard law” (unanimously) has at the same time become more difficult, and existing rules and regulations have been weakened by transition periods and exemptions granted to acceding states (depending on the “fit” or “misfit” of the political, legal and administrative structures in the acceding countries and the acquis communautaire).

Thus, the role of law and judicial review has witnessed the same contradictory development as have the decision-making procedures on the European level, leading to a highly complex, differentiated and intransparent system of rules and regulations.

VI. Enlargement leads to the creation of “fuzzy borders” of the EU.

After five enlargement rounds, the EU has become more and more connected and integrated into an increasingly dense cobweb of relations with third countries and other trading blocs. A multitude of trade, military and security, development, environmental and other bonds have been tied by and around the enlarging EC/EU, including more and more “outsiders” into the Union’s framework in more or less close relationships. This development has lead to increasingly “fuzzy” European borders. In reaction to this, the EU has tried to delineate and
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profile measures – so far with limited success.

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8.5 Further reading


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