

OPENING REMARKS

The life of 25 European nations was recently marked with an outstanding event – 10 new countries – Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary and the Czech Republic – joined the European Union. At midnight (01.00 a.m. by Kyiv time), on May 1, 2004, the Agreement on Enlargement came into force. The population of the EU grew by 70 million (the population of the new member-countries) to more than 450 million people. The European Union becomes the most powerful economic union and one of the largest non-governmental formations in the world. The size of its economy surpasses that of the USA by much. Today, 25 nations are expecting (and not groundlessly) that the EU expansion will break new grounds for social and economic growth.

The European family increased. The first and the sincerest feeling about such an event in any family is joy. But as the euphoria goes, the real-life questions arise. What really matters today is probably what should be done to bridge the income gap between the «old» and the «new» EU members. Another no less important question is how not to lose national identity in the Great Union, how not to melt away in it. The Ukrainians still remember «the great and the mighty Soviet Union» and one of the major causes of its downfall – the inability to realize this aim. So may the new experiment succeed and become a good example of how to pave the way to happiness for the rest of the world.

On the agenda of the EU nations today are the tasks of creating new effective institutions, involving new EU members into the Lisbon norms implementation process, and carrying out structural reforms. In 2000 Europe decided to take a huge step forward in everything related to manufacturing, technology and employment over the next 10 years. However, the needed reforms either have not yet been realized at all, or have been half realized. And even though the reasons of this delay, as Romano Prodi, Head of European Commission asserts, are already disclosed, the year 2005 is not far off. His inference sounds sacramental to all EU countries: «If we go on being incapable of investing in research and reducing – instead of increasing – the financing of advanced technology, we will never achieve our objectives». Setting and achieving such an objective is no less important for us, the Ukrainians, and for that, we need to study and use the experience of our new neighbour.

The enlargement of the European Union is an outstanding event for Ukraine as well. We acquired a new democratic and prosperous neighbour – a good model for developing countries.

The Ukrainians share the joy of the EU nations as we are bound up by common continent, common history, and common mentality. Especially significant are the words of Vaclav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, «We are joining not the Europe we have always been in, but the European Union».

Ukraine has always been in Europe. At different times its territories and the territories of today's EU member countries belonged to other states in Europe: the Polish-Lithuanian Principality, the Dual Monarchy, Romania, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union. And now, the Ukrainian nation has clearly expressed its strategic goal – integration into the European Union. This goal commits us to many obligations, the major of which being peaceful coexistence and economic collaboration.

The Editorial Board of the Journal has always paid much attention to cooperation of Ukraine and the European Union. We will readily publish further the articles devoted to the models and suggestions concerning the development of mutually beneficial economic relations of our country with the European Union.

Editor-in-chief