

the preparation for the enlargement to the technical issues of the weight of votes allocated to countries and to the maintenance of the unanimity institute in as broad a range of competencies as possible. The ability to veto a decision by the Union is key in the strategy of small states for which the formal equality of states in the system is essential to offset the natural influence of big countries. The strength of common institutions and the equality of votes in the matters of vital interest are the foundation on which the success of small states in the Union fundamentally depends.

In practice, however, this is exactly where we begin to face a conflict born out of the variety of possible approaches. If we want to see strong institutions capable of offsetting the influence of big partners, we should limit our sovereignty as small states for the benefit of the whole. Given their sheer size, small states and, especially, young states paradoxically view such limitation of sovereignty which much greater concern than bigger ones. Although the emphasis on intergovernmental processes underscores the supremacy of decision-making by member countries over the decision-making of the whole, on the other hand it creates an environment which accords an advantage to big states. The experience that small countries such as Finland have gained during the most recent enlargement indicates that many countries with a traditionally strong position of the nation state gradually develop a penchant for promoting Community methods as they become convinced that they would be better off by being in the core and thus be able to affect the decision-making process of the whole.

In the meantime, the strengthening of institutions and of the entire nature of the Union is not a key issue of the political strategy of member countries. For the enlargement project to succeed, it is essential that the internal power equilibrium within the EU be retained so that the over-representation of small states can be preserved to the maximum extent still acceptable to big states. As regards next year's EU enlargement, these factors will be further complicated by the fact that the new acceding small countries will be net beneficiaries unlike the big countries that tend to be net contributors. Here, however, one should also ponder the ultimate implications of the current enlargement process that will be accomplished with the accession of Turkey. From the standpoint of the internal equilibrium within the EU, Turkey's accession would be tantamount to an earthquake and would necessitate a new revision of Union