

2 Pan-Europe

A continental space for cooperation(s)

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With its military, economic and cultural blocs, Europe was the epitome of Cold War systemic antagonism, ideological confrontation and society separation. The fact that the historiography of post-Cold War Central and Eastern Europe offers a narrative of these countries' "return to Europe" and considers the forty-year socialist experience an interlude in an otherwise all-European or pan-European history only strengthens the image of a divided Cold War Europe. In the past decade, however, a flourishing historiography focusing on Europeans' agency is deeply changing our understanding of the continent as a realm of confrontation and separation.

In particular, studies on détente have revealed that European governments on the one hand and the superpowers on the other held different views on its meaning, scope and aim. The US-Soviet détente was a decade-long period of bilateral agreements aiming to consolidate bipolarity and lower the costs (and risks) of military confrontation. In contrast, 'European détente' had a transformative intent, as it aimed to overcome the Cold War partition of the continent through a gradual process of expanding contacts and interdependence between Western and Eastern Europe.¹

Several historians have also shown that European détente, with its multi-layered patterns, became a key feature of the continent from the mid-1960s until the end of the Cold War, thanks to the efforts of European countries, including the neutral ones, as opposed to the US, to preserve cooperation. By the mid-1970s, European states and citizens were connected through an expanding web of political, economic and cultural exchanges. This area of pan-European cooperation, which coexisted with Cold War military alliances, border fences and the Berlin Wall, nourished interdependence between the capitalist (which includes neutral) and socialist European countries. Historians Oliver Bange and Poul Villaume have recently defined this long détente as 'antagonistic cooperation' with strong elements of a 'trans-bloc, trans-societal and trans-ideological framework' and with European actors at its centre.²

It is now evident that European détente also enhanced continental multilateral cooperation. This was epitomised by the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and its ensuing process, which historiography

now recognises as having favoured a more autonomous role for the European states, be they Western, Eastern or neutral and non-aligned.³

This opening pan-European space also prompted the action of actors that were previously passive, such as the European Economic Community (EEC). Ludlow has debunked the myth of a Community insulated from Cold War dynamics in the 1960s, while research on the 1970s has identified the emergence of the EEC as an influential actor in the CSCE context, and its transformative influence on the Soviet Union and its allies and on Yugoslavia.⁴ It is becoming clear that from the early 1970s onwards the enlarged, strengthened and politically active EEC had a leading role in the promotion of new European relations.

To reveal the complexity and interconnectedness of this emerging pan-European space for cooperation, this chapter considers political and economic interactions at the bilateral and multilateral levels, the main forms of integration between East and West and the impact of EEC policies on the socialist countries, including the question of recognition.

Bilateral détente and cooperation

With the onset of the Cold War, the West's containment and embargo policies and the creation of separate economic organisations severely reduced trade across the continent. Already after Stalin's death in 1953, however, most Western European governments saw the possibility of beginning to normalise exchanges. Denmark and the UK were pioneers in the field. In the 1950s, Danish politicians, civil servants and business milieus perceived the economic importance of trade with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and engaged in its development.⁵ In the UK, Winston Churchill intended to renew politico-diplomatic contacts and promote as many commercial, social and cultural contacts as possible across the Iron Curtain.⁶ As socialist regimes broke away from autarchy and Western countries granted long-term credits (1957) and liberalising measures (1963), East-West trade increased.

It was between the mid-1960s and the early 1970s, however, that these attitudes became mainstream. Most Western European governments deliberately used trade, economic, financial and cultural cooperation to foster dialogue with socialist bloc countries, with the political aim of overcoming the continental divide in the long term.⁷ The first articulated vision of this kind was expressed by French President Charles de Gaulle, who in 1965 launched a policy of 'détente, entente and cooperation' with the Soviet Union and its allies. In his opinion, this was the only road to peace in Europe and to the solution of its main problem, the German question. France signed a relevant commercial treaty with the USSR, and economic and cultural cooperation agreements with the other socialist countries.⁸ Italy too was very active in the mid-1960s, increasing its trade with the CMEA area and securing one of the biggest slices of the Soviet market for industrial orders.⁹ Among the smaller states, Belgium was particularly dynamic. In 1966, Foreign Minister Pierre Harmel started a lively policy of contacts with the East in the conviction that the existence of different regimes was not an insuperable

obstacle to common initiatives and that economic détente was the road to and the pre-condition for political détente.¹⁰ In the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), businessmen started to penetrate socialist markets ahead of diplomatic improvements.¹¹ Then, between 1966 and 1969 the Grosse Koalition government revoked the Hallstein Doctrine, according to which no relations should exist with the GDR and those states that had recognised it (with the exception of the Soviet Union). When Willy Brandt became chancellor in 1969, the FRG moved to fully implementing the *Neue Ostpolitik*, which was based on the concept that change (and eventually reunification) would only come after recognition of the existing realities and rapprochement with the East.¹² Thanks to re-established diplomatic relations and fundamental treaties signed with the Soviet Union (1970), Poland (1970) and Czechoslovakia (1973) and agreements with the GDR (1972), the FRG shortly became the most important Western economic partner for all the socialist countries. The economic prosperity that Western Europe had achieved by the mid-1960s was 'the foundation for the self-confidence required to pursue a policy of open borders and open competition'.¹³ Likewise, European neutral countries enhanced trade and cooperation with the socialist economies.¹⁴

Nevertheless, the détente policies of Western and neutral European states would have not gone far had they not met a new attitude on the part of the socialist regimes. Nikita Khrushchev, secretary-general of the Soviet Communist Party from 1956, promoted a policy of peaceful coexistence which called for a cooperative/competitive relationship with the West.¹⁵ Besides strategic considerations, economic reasons gave impetus to expanding relations with developed market economies in the mid-1960s. As the socialist economies could not adjust rapidly enough to the unfolding technological revolution, the ruling parties ideologically recognised foreign trade as an important factor in socialist development and modernisation with an eye to improving living standards, which had become crucial for the regimes' political stability.¹⁶

Economic and financial relations markedly increased between the two halves of Europe, unhalted even by the repression of the Prague Spring in August 1968. The most important relations developed bilaterally at the state-to-state level in the field of trade and financial loans, followed by industrial cooperation. However, the Western governments often used trade agreements to allow or regulate relations initiated and conducted by private enterprises. On their side, the socialist regimes in the 1960s introduced decentralisation and increased the capacity of enterprises to develop relations with foreign operators, provided they acted within the context of the economic plan.¹⁷ Bilateral cooperation thus also developed at the firm-to-firm level, adding multiple threads to the web of trans-European relations.¹⁸ These were not confined to economic relations; cultural exchanges and tourism were also important, and a diversified range of non-governmental actors was key in effecting trans-European contacts.¹⁹ The Iron Curtain that parted Europe was becoming increasingly porous.

This European détente did not grind to a halt in the late 1970s and early 1980s, a period that some scholars focusing on the superpowers still label the "second Cold War". Although all the governments of the West denounced the Soviet invasion of

Afghanistan in 1979 and the imposition of martial law in Poland in 1981, actions across the Atlantic differed. US policy shifted first to sanctions under Jimmy Carter, and then to economic warfare with Moscow during Ronald Reagan's first mandate. In contrast, the Western European governments continued to pursue détente.²⁰ In addition to confrontation, Cold War Europe experienced growing East-West interdependence nourished by a multi-layered and lasting network of exchanges and treaty obligations.

The multilateralisation of détente

Another peculiarity of European détente was that it had an additional multilateral component. Already in 1966, the UK government tabled a proposal to NATO for a code of good behaviour in East-West relations in Europe that would expand bilateral and collective cooperation in several fields.²¹ Although the proposal did not spur a NATO initiative, the Western Europeans' penchant for a more constructive approach towards the socialist bloc entered the 'Report on the Future Tasks of the Alliance' (Harmel Report), which was approved in 1967 and which assigned NATO the double aim of guaranteeing deterrence while promoting détente.²² The first step in this new pattern was the 1968 NATO appeal to the Warsaw Pact for negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction in Europe (MBFR).²³ The proposal only entered the diplomatic scene in connection with the CSCE.

On 17 March 1969, the Warsaw Pact issued the Budapest appeal, which re-launched an old proposal for a pan-European security conference enriched with an economic cooperation component. It soon became evident that in the Western camp European governments favoured the proposal to various degrees, while the lukewarm US administration only agreed in order to preserve bloc unity.²⁴ In December 1969 the NATO Council declared the conference a feasible option within the general East-West dialogue but conditioned acceptance on a successful outcome of negotiations on Ostpolitik treaties, Berlin and German-German relations, as well as the opening of the MBFR talks.²⁵

These talks started in Vienna in October 1973, and continued intermittently with little progress until early 1990, when the forum was replaced with talks on conventional forces in Europe. The CSCE, by contrast, became a permanent feature of European life, turning into a proper organisation in the post-Cold War era: OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe). Its success is likely to have been due to its being a pan-European forum for discussion of a wide range of matters rather than a bloc-to-bloc negotiation, where conflict was the default setting.

From 22 November 1972 to 8 June 1973 the diplomatic delegations of thirty-five countries – the US, Canada, the Soviet Union and all the European states except Albania – gathered in Helsinki to set the rules, format and agenda for the CSCE negotiations. The negotiations started on 18 September 1973 and concluded twenty-two months later. The CSCE produced the Final Act, a non-legally binding document solemnly signed at a summit in Helsinki from 30 July to 1 August 1975.

The Final Act called for balanced progress in three subject areas, informally called “baskets”: questions of security in Europe, including principles guiding relations among participating states and confidence-building measures (Basket I); cooperation in the fields of economics, science, technology and the environment (Basket II); and cooperation in humanitarian and other fields (Basket III). Rather than permanently selling off Eastern Europe to the Soviets in exchange for empty declarations of goodwill, as vocal detractors of the CSCE decried at the time, the Final Act established a pattern of changing the status quo.²⁶ First, while recognising existing frontiers, it explicitly admitted their peaceful change according to international agreements, thus legitimising the possibility of future German reunification. Second, the wording of the Final Act clearly rejected the Brezhnev doctrine and upheld the rights inherent in sovereignty irrespective of a country’s belonging to a group or alliance. Finally, it endorsed the liberal concepts of human rights and the centrality of individuals, giving Western governments and Eastern European dissidents the *locus standi* to legitimately request the modification of certain rules and practices in the socialist regimes.²⁷

The nature of the CSCE constituted per se a step towards overcoming the Cold War blocs, for its procedures guaranteed all countries the right to table and debate proposals on an equal basis. This gave neutral and non-aligned states an unprecedented room for manoeuvre and also made it more difficult for the Soviets to force alignment on its allies.²⁸ All accounts of the CSCE report that the delegations teamed up in three major caucuses – NATO, the Warsaw Pact and the neutrals and non-aligned group. However, recent historiography reveals a much more complex reality: the actual CSCE dichotomy was between countries interested in stabilising the situation in Europe – the superpowers, and the GDR to a great extent – and states promoting its overcoming. Among the latter, the true makers of the Final Act were the nine states of the EEC speaking as one, the neutral and non-aligned countries and Romania. The EEC Nine introduced Basket III and shaped most of the Final Act according to their shared vision of *détente* as a transformative process prioritising citizens’ rights and conditions. The neutral and non-aligned countries were key in securing the rule that all states would participate on an equal basis and in effecting the agreement on the follow-up to the Helsinki conference. Excluded from East-West negotiations on crucial security issues, they were determined to guarantee the continuity of the CSCE, where they could have a say on these matters. Although it was a member of the Warsaw Pact, Romania fully shared this view that security should be debated by all states outside of the blocs, and even called for a collective security system substituting the existing military alliances. Moreover, the Romanian delegation constantly stressed the relevance of principles that openly denied legitimacy to the Brezhnev doctrine, which the Bucharest authorities had always opposed.²⁹

The Final Act of the CSCE prefigured a general shift to a new system that would supersede the bipolar order and create a pan-European space for bilateral and multilateral cooperation. This was confirmed by the CSCE becoming a process through follow-up conferences in Belgrade (1977–78), Madrid (1980–83) and Vienna (1985–89). These meetings further highlighted the European nature

of the CSCE. Whereas the superpowers used meetings as a battlefield for their renewed confrontation, the European participants preserved the CSCE as a forum for cooperation.³⁰ However, the CSCE provisions, in particular those in Basket III, also represented a formidable challenge to the stability and legitimacy of the socialist regimes.³¹ Opening up to the West entailed perils, which the European socialist regimes assessed and addressed in various manners, as the chapters in this book illustrate.

The CSCE also promoted multilateralism through a revival of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). This organisation was established in 1947 in Geneva to help with post-war reconstruction, but its activity had slowed down during the height of the Cold War. After Stalin's death, cooperation restarted in the fields of statistics, trade, agriculture, science and technology.³² From the early 1960s onwards, the ECE Secretariat established informal relations with the OECD, the Council of Europe, CMEA and the EEC. The year 1967 saw an important political declaration re-launching the role of the ECE, which was issued at the special ministerial meeting celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the organisation. The declaration recognised the ECE as the most important framework for East-West dialogue on all-European economic and technological cooperation. In 1969, the ECE agreed on four priority areas for future cooperation: trade development; scientific and technological cooperation; long-term economic projections and planning; and environmental problems.³³ Light structures, a pragmatic approach and consensus decision-making made the ECE the only organisation to which the CSCE Final Act assigned a role in the implementation of its provisions. The ECE Executive Secretary and his staff immediately started to prepare proposals linked to the Final Act mandate with a view to presenting some results to the first CSCE follow-up meeting in Belgrade in 1977.³⁴

Integration processes and their interrelations

The image of a Cold War Europe divided in two opposing blocs is also due to the existence of two major economic organisations East and West (the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance [CMEA] and the EEC), which had no official relations until 1988 and to the persistence of the socialist official policy of non-recognition of the EEC until the same date. This situation would seem to be in sharp contrast with the emergence of the pan-European cooperation space described previously. However, close scrutiny of developments behind official policies reveals actual connections and exchanges.

Western Europe's integration process developed in the cocoon of stability and security that US post-war policy had established, including the Bretton Woods international monetary system and NATO's military umbrella. France, Italy, the FRG, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg first agreed to create the European Coal and Steel Community (1951), and then they moved on to the bolder step of establishing, through the Treaties of Rome signed on 25 March 1957, Euratom and the EEC. Common to the three communities was the choice to transfer competence in specific sectors from the state level to newly created supranational

institutions. The EEC Treaty called for the creation of a customs union, a common market and common policies. In its first decade, the integration process proved very effective, thanks to the fact that it was based on the harmonisation of economies that had been closely interdependent in the past, free from the presence of a hegemon within and unencumbered by Cold War concerns, which were dealt with within the Atlantic Alliance.³⁵ Because of the latter, EEC institutions did not really pay attention to the East in the first decade.

By contrast, the East followed Western Europe's economic integration closely. To begin with, the CMEA was born in reaction to the Marshall Plan and the formation of Western institutions that organised economic and financial relations among the capitalist countries while openly excluding socialist states.³⁶ Cold War concerns and the ideological mindset also informed the view that the socialist regimes held of the European communities since their inception. Stalin's capitalist encirclement phobia led to identifying the ECSC as a mere means to revitalise German industrial power in favour of the anti-Soviet policy of the imperialist West. Constrained by ideology, expert analyses confirmed the forecast of an inevitable conflict among capitalist economies rather than appreciating the novelty of supranational integration.³⁷ Reality soon falsified this dogmatic interpretation. The ECSC proved a major success by contributing to the economic resurrection of West Germany and linking it to the other Western European economies. The creation of the EEC and then the achievements of the customs union and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) further proved that capitalism could organise in positive-sum interactions.

In order to compete with the West, Khrushchev reformed the relations with the Soviet allies in a more economically rational and fair way and launched the first attempt at socialist integration. In 1959, the CMEA, which until then only existed on paper, acquired a structure and a statute.³⁸ New economic theories supported specialisation across the socialist world. In 1961, the CMEA Council approved the fundamental principles of the socialist division of labour, according to which socialist economies would gradually integrate through the coordination of national plans.³⁹ Moreover, in 1964 the International Bank for Economic Cooperation was established to ease and regulate intra-CMEA payments by means of the 'convertible rouble'.

Socialist propaganda continued to depict the EEC as a Cold War economic instrument, a means to strengthen revanchist Germany, a despicable imperialist tool and a source of discrimination in international trade.⁴⁰ However, socialist economic experts started to elaborate a more sophisticated analysis. In 1962, the Institute for International Economy and Politics in Prague convened the first international conference on the problems of Western European integration.⁴¹ The successful development of the EEC and the remarkable growth of its members' economies led experts to acknowledge the unprecedented features of the EEC experiment. Soviet intellectual evolution was first visible in August 1962, when the Academy of Sciences' Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) published its thirty-two theses 'On the imperialist integration in Western Europe' and acknowledged the original and positive experiment of capitalist

integration.⁴² In December 1962, Khrushchev recognised the capacity of Western European capitalist states to overcome their natural antagonism and forge some positive alliances.⁴³

By contrast, the division of labour in the socialist community met with the resistance of several member states, most vocally Romania, whose political authorities refused to see the country relegated to the role of agricultural provider. Many economists in Eastern Europe considered that the coordination of national plans at the CMEA level would reproduce and even amplify most of the national malfunctioning and rigidities, and that the needs of the colossal Soviet economy would inevitably prevail over those of the smaller European economies.⁴⁴ As foreign trade (outside the CMEA) was acknowledged as a major factor in economic growth in the mid-1960s, Hungary was the first CMEA member to recognise the 'objective reality' of the EEC and the necessity to adopt a correspondingly realistic attitude to the matter of developing contacts with it.⁴⁵

The EEC's Hague Summit in December 1969 decisively attracted the attention of socialist analysts. The EEC member states agreed to complete the Common Market, to deepen integration via the adoption of other common policies and to open the negotiations for the accession of the UK, Denmark, Ireland and Norway. Moreover, they posited that the enlarged EEC should have a prominent international *political* role, and hence called for a mechanism for political coordination. The first meeting of the brand-new European Political Cooperation took place less than a year later, on 19 November 1970. The EEC member states lively discussed East-West relations, especially the socialist proposal for a pan-European conference, and decided to elaborate a collective approach to the CSCE distinct from NATO coordination.

The bold steps taken by the EEC gave a new impulse to socialist debate on integration, which had been hitherto described as a capitalist feature and hence rejected as an option for the socialist states. Now, prompted by the scientific-technological revolution and the deep changes in the way production and the division of labour were organised, integration was recognised as a global trend of an objective nature.⁴⁶ Therefore, between 1969 and 1971 the CMEA members discussed how to promote socialist integration. According to Soviet proposals, the gradual integration of the socialist economies should be achieved through joint planning at the CMEA level, coordination of national economic policies, the creation of supranational institutions and the elaboration of a coordinated foreign trade policy towards non-socialist countries. The Soviet attempt at organising a supranational CMEA was driven by the political rationale of preserving bloc cohesion – what has been described as the economic component of the Brezhnev doctrine.⁴⁷ However, the CMEA European members had a say on how integration should be organised and they obstructed any step towards supranationality, which would have severely limited their autonomy and given Moscow maximum leverage.⁴⁸ For all the ruling elites, autonomy over national economic planning was key to preserving their legitimacy and power. However, it was the Romanian leadership that took the responsibility to kill supranational initiatives. The Romanian representatives argued that CMEA resolutions should respect member

states' sovereignty, which entailed the right to formulate national economic policy according to national interests and socio-economic conditions. Accordingly, each country was also free to conduct trade relations with third countries without the constraints of a CMEA policy.⁴⁹ Thanks to the unfaltering stance of the Romanians, the 'Comprehensive Programme for the further deepening and perfection of the collaboration and developing of the socialist economic integration of the CMEA member states' approved in 1971 contained no supranational features and, more importantly, no common foreign trade policy.⁵⁰

Socialist academic experts animatedly discussed the scope and consequences of Western European integration. The EEC was increasingly seen as a specific centre of power within the capitalist world, able to successfully compete with the economies of Japan and the US.⁵¹ Socialist experts interpreted the creation of the monetary 'snake' and then of the European Monetary System as a defence against the end of the Bretton Woods system and the now free-floating US dollar.⁵² In the eyes of the socialists, Western Europe was coming out of the American cocoon to become an independent entity. At the beginning of 1972, a series of articles in the Soviet newspaper *Pravda* highlighted the polycentrism of the capitalist system and the importance of Western Europe as a third pole between Washington and Moscow in positive tones.⁵³ From the economic point of view, the idea gained acceptance that the EEC was a reality to reckon with. Nevertheless, how exactly to do so proved a less straightforward question.

A major discussion started within the CMEA, where the GDR and the Soviet Union demanded a bloc response to the "EEC question". The Soviets did not lose time to indicate the road. In December 1972, a Brezhnev public speech explicitly called for EEC-CMEA negotiations. In 1974, in a clear move to re-establish Soviet leadership of the bloc, Brezhnev informed the CMEA partners that he had decided to open such negotiations.⁵⁴

The two organisations established contact and then opened negotiations in the spring of 1978. Talks dragged on, broke off in 1980, resumed in 1984 and only ended up successfully in 1988. From the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, many experts on both sides of Europe discussed possible mechanisms for collaboration between the two organisations.⁵⁵ The main problem with EEC-CMEA relations lay in the nature of the socialist organisation which, unlike the EEC, had no competence to sign trade agreements on behalf of its member states. This point was constantly reiterated by the EEC representatives, who proposed cooperation on subjects such as statistics and research in science and technology. Besides legal and technical concerns, however, there was a strong political rationale. In 1973, the EEC members had formally agreed not to treat the socialist countries as a bloc, their priority goal being to establish bilateral contacts between the EEC and each socialist country.

The EEC's impact on the socialist countries and the question of recognition

If the EEC experience influenced the socialist countries' attempts at integrating, certainly the impact it had on their economies was a far more important matter

for discussion and strategy definition at the CMEA and national levels alike. The policy of non-recognition, although still in place, lost substance as one by one all the socialist regimes developed relations with the EEC.

The first framework in which the socialist countries *de facto* acknowledged the existence and competence of the EEC was that of the international fora in which it participated. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was the first case in point. Czechoslovakia was a founding member (although not actively participating); Poland was admitted in 1967, Romania in 1971 and Hungary in 1973. The EEC had competence to negotiate in the GATT and had a say in the admission of new members. In this multilateral context, the attitude of the socialist countries was pragmatically similar to that of other GATT members that had officially recognised the EEC.⁵⁶

The CSCE was the other multilateral forum in which socialist countries, including the Soviet Union, were eventually compelled to *de facto* recognise the EEC. In this case, the result came out of assertive action orchestrated on purpose by the EEC Commission and the member states. While the EEC was a pillar of the GATT when a few socialist states joined, the CSCE was a diplomatic gathering convened among *states* and springing from an initiative of the socialist bloc. One of the fundamental rationales behind their proposition to discuss economic cooperation at the multilateral level was precisely to eliminate discriminatory practices in continental trade. Quite evident between the lines was reference to the EEC, the protectionist policies of which the socialist regimes had long denounced. Convinced that the Soviets intended to use the CSCE to hamper the progress of Western integration and dilute the EEC into a pan-European system, the EEC member states collectively prepared for a hard fight. They agreed that the best way to preserve the EEC was to make it take part in the CSCE negotiations. The tactic was simple: as states had the right to compose their delegations as they saw fit, Commission representatives joined the CSCE delegation of the member state holding the EEC presidency and, more importantly, intervened in the negotiations by officially expressing the viewpoint of the Community to the extent required by its competence. Initially, the socialist delegates uttered some protests. After a while, as the negotiations proceeded quite smoothly in Basket II, the socialist delegates showed acquiescence and a business-like attitude. The most significant step, however, was adding the EEC to the signatories of the Final Act, which the EEC member states had categorically established as a non-negotiable condition for their assent to closing the CSCE at the summit level. The Soviets gave in because Brezhnev had linked his name to the CSCE initiative and could not risk its failure. Hence, Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro signed the Final Act in his capacity as president of the EEC Council and declared that the phrasing 'participating States' would apply to the EEC in accordance with its competence and rules. That signature engaged the EEC in the CSCE process just like the participating *states*.⁵⁷

However, the socialist regimes' acquiescence in multilateral fora neither meant revoking the non-recognition policy nor did it entail the development of bilateral relations with the Community. The contacts with it were induced by the

consequences that the actual and potential deepening and enlargement of the EEC had for the socialist economies.⁵⁸ The first time that progress in Western European integration compelled the socialist economies to deviate from the strict non-recognition policy was in the mid-1960s, when the development of the CAP entailed heavily preferential measures in favour of EEC agriculture produce against that coming from third countries. The protectionist CAP had a severe impact on the exports of the socialist European economies. Between 1964 and 1968, the governments of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania informally approached the EEC Commission and negotiated specific deals that could mitigate the charges and quotas imposed on agricultural imports by the EEC. The CAP spurred Yugoslavia's first official exploratory talks with the EEC Commission in 1965, which were followed by an official request for the conclusion of a trade agreement with the Community.⁵⁹ The neat growth in trade flows across the Iron Curtain between the mid-1960s and early 1970s inevitably aggravated the exposure of the CMEA socialist economies to the consequences of EEC evolution. The prospect of the EEC enlarging to the UK, Ireland, Denmark and Norway⁶⁰ constituted a major threat. These new members' production could replace some goods imported from Eastern Europe, and more importantly their imports from socialist countries would drop significantly when they began operating according to the internal rules of the Common Market. An additional EEC development that worsened the prospects of socialist exports was the imminent adoption of the Common Commercial Policy (CCP), according to which the member states surrendered their right to negotiate and sign trade agreements with third countries to the EEC Commission, which would negotiate for the whole Community. The bilateral trade agreements between EEC member states and socialist countries would remain in force until their expiry, which was 1975 at the latest.

The combination of the CCP and the EEC's forthcoming enlargement spurred the CMEA debate on recognition. Moscow maintained that relations with Western Europe should continue bilaterally between states and be accompanied by relations between the two economic organisations, which would negotiate overall trade agreements. The Soviet leadership opposed the establishment of relations between the EEC and individual CMEA countries, which would obviously loosen the cohesion of the socialist bloc and ease Western influence in Eastern Europe. Most of the Eastern European countries were not fully averse to establishing EEC-CMEA relations, as they acknowledged that negotiating as a group could enhance their chances of striking a good deal with the largest trade power in the world. In this vein, Hungary initially supported the idea of relations with the EEC within a CMEA common approach.⁶¹ By contrast, Romania remained adamant that a CMEA-EEC agreement could not prevent the member states from having relations on their own with the EEC and pursuing their specific commercial interests.⁶² Overall, export-oriented economies like Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia were more interested in direct contacts with the EEC. Due to their adopted strategies of import-led growth, they needed to increase exports to the West in order to be able to pay for imports and loans. The USSR had the luxury of not needing concessions from the EEC. Up to nine-tenths of its exports to the Common Market

consisted of oil, natural gas and other raw materials, to which the EEC applied no tariffs or quotas.⁶³ By contrast, the exports of the CMEA European countries to the EEC market consisted of foodstuffs for a quarter, materials for another quarter, and manufactured goods for the remaining half. Agricultural products, textiles, footwear, chinaware and steel faced the EEC's highest protectionist measures, for these economic sectors were struggling the most at the time. Moreover, the socialist European regimes could hardly reduce their imports from the EEC states because a large amount of them went to those industries meant to push economic growth. In deciding their approach, the Eastern European regimes also probably considered the example of Yugoslavia, which had recognised the EEC in 1968 and signed its first trade agreement with it on 19 March 1970. The accord had met many Yugoslav requests, particularly in the agricultural field, and set up a joint commission that would allow Yugoslav interests to be appraised over time.⁶⁴ The Romanian government, which opposed the CMEA attempts at elaborating a common policy towards the EEC, formally applied for beneficiary status in the Community's Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP) on 31 January 1972 and obtained it as of 1 January 1974. In August 1974, with the implementation of the CCP towards the socialist country due in six months, Polish representatives approached the EEC Commission to explore the possibility of trade talks.

The EEC and its member states had on many occasions made clear that there was no interest in an EEC-CMEA trade agreement, and that their priority was the establishment of relations between the Community and each socialist country. To make things adamantly clear and to press the case for recognition, in November 1974 the EEC Commission sent all the socialist governments a letter explaining that as of 1 January member states would no longer sign or renew bilateral trade agreements, and competence would pass to the Commission. Contextually, the Commission invited the recipients to open all-areas negotiations, for which it attached a draft agreement. The draft addressed most of the concerns of the socialist economies, namely import quotas, most favoured nation treatment, safeguard mechanisms and payment problems. Pending the replies, the EEC Council adopted unilateral import arrangements, which it would revise unilaterally every year. The letter was sent to *all* the socialist countries that had not yet recognised the EEC, including the People's Republic of China. China was the only one to reply, and positively so. Within three years it recognised the EEC and signed a major trade and cooperation agreement with it.⁶⁵ In the subsequent years, the EEC's expanding competence affected the socialist economies sector by sector. In January 1977 the Common Fisheries Policy entered into effect, and the governments of Poland, the GDR and the Soviet Union each received an EEC letter requesting that they either negotiate fishing quotas with the Commission or withdraw their fleets from EEC common waters. The three governments agreed to enter talks (which eventually broke off) in order to protect their economic and strategic interests. In December 1977, the EEC Council decided to apply the CCP to textile and steel imports from state-trading countries. To avoid severe reductions in their exports, Poland and Hungary negotiated five-year textile agreements with the Commission in 1978, and Bulgaria signed a four-year agreement in April 1979.

Czechoslovakia was the first CMEA country to conclude a steel arrangement with the Community in mid-1978, and was imitated by Hungary, Romania and Poland shortly afterwards, and by Bulgaria in January 1979. The previous year, Sofia had applied to join the Community's GSP, partly due to concerns over negative repercussions of Greece's entry in the EEC, which was then under negotiation.⁶⁶ Overall, facing the severe economic impact of actual and potential EEC policies, and confronted with a politically assertive EEC, most of the socialist regimes decided (or resigned themselves) to have direct relations with the Community, irrespective of the formal non-recognition policy and the stalling EEC-CMEA talks. The national case studies presented in the following chapters offer detailed analyses of their policymaking and actions.

Conclusions

Since the early 2000s, several historians have successfully challenged and qualified the long-lived understanding of Cold War Europe as a space of confrontation and separation. This historiography focused on European actors and relations has revealed the emergence and consolidation of a multi-layered space for cooperation which coexisted with opposing military blocs, separated economic organisations and ideological competition.

While the first signs were already visible in the aftermath of Stalin's death, it was from the mid-1960s that European actions to challenge the Cold War divide rapidly multiplied. Cooperation developed in a multitude of exchanges at the governmental and society levels in diverse fields and carried on through bilateral and multilateral relations and accords. Multilateralism became a visible aspect of continental relations from the 1970s onwards, particularly thanks to the CSCE and its ensuing process, which greatly contributed to forging true pan-European thinking.

However, for the socialist regimes this web of cooperative threads also entailed perils and challenges. To start with, most of the Western European détente policies aimed in the long run to not only overcome the Cold War but also to favour the liberalisation of the socialist regimes, and hence posed an existential threat to them. The same applied to the CSCE, which adopted the Western Europeans' view of détente and their intention to give more room for manoeuvre to citizens. Second, their adopted import-led growth strategy made the socialist economies more exposed to European capitalist countries' fortunes and actions. In particular, the development of the Western European integration process, and notably the EEC's enlargements and common policies, had direct negative impacts on the socialist economies and socialist bloc integration. The questions of recognition of and relations with the Community deepened existing fractures in the CMEA. Likewise, the search for deals with the EEC that would mitigate the impact of its protectionist policies worsened the competition between the socialist countries. Within the socialist regimes, the debate on the "EEC question" exposed different views among the ruling elites and factions within them. Beyond its economic impact, or through it, the EEC posed an existential challenge to the socialist regimes, adding to the intrinsic risks of pan-European cooperation.

The following chapters of this book reveal the internal debates and bargaining that the socialist ruling elites went through in order to elaborate a strategy that would allow them to address national economic needs while facing the impact of Western Europe's deepening integration, comply with CMEA solidarity and handle Soviet pressures for bloc discipline.

Notes

- 1 Loth, *Overcoming the Cold War*; Romano, *From détente in Europe*; Villaume and Westad, *Perforating the Iron Curtain*; Hanhimäki, "Détente in Europe, 1969–1975"; Bozo, Rey, Ludlow and Rother, *Overcoming the Iron Curtain*.
- 2 Bange and Villaume, *The long détente*, 1–15.
- 3 See the discussion below.
- 4 Ludlow, "An insulated community?"; Romano, *From détente in Europe*; Romano, "Untying Cold War knots"; Zaccaria, *The EEC's Yugoslav policy*.
- 5 Boje, Rostgaard and Rüdiger, *Handelspolitikken som kampplads under Den Kolde Krig*.
- 6 Woolcock, "Great Britain," 143.
- 7 For instance, Loth and Soutou, *The making of détente*.
- 8 Rey, *La tentation du rapprochement*; Vaïsse, *La Grandeur*; Badalassi, *En finir avec la guerre froide*.
- 9 Bagnato, *Prove di Ostpolitik*; Fava, "Between business interests and ideological marketing."
- 10 Dujardin, "Go-between: Belgium and Détente."
- 11 Rudolph, *Wirtschaftsdiplomatie im Kalten Krieg*.
- 12 For instance, Hofmann, *The emergence of détente in Europe*; Niedhart, "Ostpolitik."
- 13 Loth, "The Cold War and the social and economic history of the twentieth century," 520.
- 14 For instance, Enderle-Burcel, *Gaps in the Iron Curtain*.
- 15 Mueller, *A good example of peaceful coexistence?*, 16–20.
- 16 Andras Inotai, "CMEA integration and national economic policies," 81; Wallace and Clarke, *Comecon, trade and the West*, 102–3; Berend, "What is Central and Eastern Europe?," 413; Cutler, "Harmonizing EEC-CMEA relations," 259.
- 17 Cutler, "Harmonizing EEC-CMEA," 259–60.
- 18 Several scholars have analysed East-West business interaction and financial flows, often with the aim of offering policy advice to governments, for instance, Paliwoda, *Joint East-West marketing*; Saunders, *East-West cooperation in business*; Hill, *East-West trade*; Fallenbuchl, "East-West trade in capital goods since 1970." More recently, Tiusanen, *Western direct investments*; Eloranta and Ojala, *East-West Trade and the Cold War*.
- 19 Mikkonen and Koivunen, *Beyond the divide*; Villaume, Mariager and Porsdam, *The 'long 1970s'*; Mikkonen, Jari Parkkinen and Scott-Smith, *Entangled East and West*; Bechmann, Pedersen and Noack, *Tourism and travel during the Cold War*.
- 20 For instance, Sjursen, *The United States, Western Europe and the Polish Crisis*; Chiampan, "Those European chicken littles"; Bange and Villaume, *The long détente*.
- 21 Romano, "The UK policy towards socialist countries," 467.
- 22 Wenger, "NATO's transformation in the 1960s."
- 23 "Declaration on Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction, Statement of NATO Ministerial Meeting," Reykjavik, 24 and 25 June 1968, accessed 13 March 2020, www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c680624b.htm.
- 24 Crump and Romano, "Challenging the superpower straitjacket."
- 25 "NATO Declaration on European Security," Brussels, 5 December 1969, paras. 14 and 15, accessed 13 March 2020, www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c691204b.htm.
- 26 See Bange and Niedhart, *Helsinki 1975 and the transformation of Europe*.
- 27 On the consequences of this approach, Thomas, "Human rights ideas"; Snyder, *Human rights activism*.
- 28 For instance, Jarzabek, "Hope and reality"; Fisher, *Neutral power in the CSCE*; Makko, *Ambassadors of realpolitik*.

- 29 Romano, "The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe: a reappraisal."
- 30 Bilandzic, Dahlmann and Kosanovic, *From Helsinki to Belgrade*; Selvage, "The super-powers and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe"; Romano, "More cohesive, still divergent."
- 31 Selvage and Süß, *Staatssicherheit und KSZE-Prozess*.
- 32 Stinsky, *International cooperation in Cold War Europe*.
- 33 Chossudovsky, *East-West diplomacy*, 14.
- 34 Chossudovsky, *East-West diplomacy*, 21.
- 35 Ludlow, "European integration and the Cold War," 191–2.
- 36 Brabant, *Economic integration in Eastern Europe*, 8–12.
- 37 Zubok, "The Soviet Union and European integration," 85.
- 38 Brabant, *Economic integration in Eastern Europe*, 46–7 and 52–54.
- 39 Wallace and Clarke, *Comecon, trade and the West*, 5–6.
- 40 Rey, "Le retour à l'Europe?," 8–10.
- 41 Ham, *The EC, Eastern Europe*, 64.
- 42 Grachev, "The Soviet leadership's view," 40.
- 43 Rey, "Le retour à l'Europe," 13.
- 44 Bideleux, "The Comecon experiment," 186.
- 45 See Chapter 3 by Pål Germuska in this book.
- 46 Bideleux, "The Comecon experiment," 187–8.
- 47 Kansikas, "Room to manoeuvre?," 197.
- 48 Brabant, *Economic Integration in Eastern Europe*, 85–89. Also, Stone, *Satellites and commissars*.
- 49 Dragomir, "Breaking the CMEA hold."
- 50 Kansikas, *Socialist countries face the European Community*, 59.
- 51 Zaslavsky, "L'atteggiamento sovietico," 63.
- 52 Cutler, "Harmonizing EEC-CMEA," 261–3.
- 53 Rey, "Le retour à l'Europe," 18.
- 54 Kansikas, *Socialist countries face the European community*.
- 55 Pinder, "Economic integration"; Lebahn, "Alternatives in EC/CMEA relations"; Chapman, "The economic relations between the EEC and the CMEA"; Cutler, "Harmonizing EEC-CMEA."
- 56 For details, see the specific chapters in this book.
- 57 Romano, *From détente in Europe*.
- 58 When not otherwise stated, the following part draws from Romano, "Untying Cold War knots."
- 59 See Chapter 9 by Benedetto Zaccaria in this book.
- 60 Norway rejected membership in a referendum in September 1972; the others joined the EEC on 1 January 1973.
- 61 See Chapter 3 by Pål Germuska in this book.
- 62 See Chapter 8 by Elena Dragomir in this book.
- 63 Pinder, *The European Community*, 14.
- 64 Zaccaria, *The EEC's Yugoslav policy*, 30–45.
- 65 Chenard, "Seeking détente."
- 66 See Chapter 7 by Elitza Stanoeva in this book.

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