

**YOUTH****Josef Joffe****The Homecoming****THE REAL NEW EUROPE**

**T**HE FIRST TIME SOMEBODY TRIED TO "INTEGRATE" THE CZECHS WAS IN 1618, when the rulers of the Habsburg Empire told them not so politely that they all had to become Catholic. Immediately, Vienna had the Thirty Years' War on its hands, and the defiance continued for three centuries. Nor were the Czechs enthusiastic about a "united Europe" run by the Nazis or the Soviets. On May 1, though, the Czechs won't resist but rejoice—along with all the other East and Central European countries slated to enter the European Union.

Why? Listen to Tomáš Chalupa, 29, borough mayor in Prague: "My generation's dream was the freedom to talk, work and live as you wish." Ask young Hungarians, Poles, Slovaks, Slovenes and their counterparts in the three Baltic states, Malta and Cyprus, and you'll get the same answer. To them, joining the E.U. means "returning home" to the shared European civilization that was previously sealed off by the Iron Curtain.

"Old" Europe, the chunk extending from Lisbon to Leipzig, isn't quite as excited. The mood is one of apprehension. "Yes, we have to take them in," West Europeans mutter, "but what will they do to us?" The litany of angst runs from money to movement. Spaniards, French and Portuguese worry about having to share agricultural subsidies; other E.U. countries fret about hordes of eager workers driving down their wages. And all of them fear the assault of competition—for jobs, investment and housing. Actually, they can relax, because the accession treaties provide for a longish transition during which the freedom of movement to the West will be severely curtailed, as will the purchase of land in the East. Nonetheless, Western Europe's old order will change.

Just take foreign policy. While the Westies no longer feel the need to defer to Uncle Sam as protector, the Easties remember their recent history and their enduring geography. Their mind-set could be framed in terms of a "physical" law: the closer to Russia, the greater the fondness for the United States. The psychological corollary is: the more painful the memory of Soviet oppression, the more reluctant a country will be to entrust its security to second-tier powers like France and Germany. Does this mean that "New" Europe is rabidly pro-American? No, says Ivan Krastev of the Center of Liberal Strategies in Sofia: the East's "gift" to the E.U. is rather "anti-anti-Americanism." In other words, Berlin and Paris will now find it harder to mobilize the E.U. against Washington. Something else will become a lot

harder, too: building the "United States of Europe." It didn't work with the original six or the present 15. How could it possibly work with 25? Europe's grand adventure will be recharged on May 1; its grand ambition will not. ■

*Josef Joffe is editor of the German weekly newspaper Die Zeit*

**EXTENDED FAMILY:**  
With 10 new  
members from  
the East, the E.U.'s  
old order is in for a  
shake-up

BENOIT DOPPAGNE—EPA