

*European Integration and Ethnic Minority Mobilization:  
The cases of Latvia, Hungary and Romania*

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**Abstract**

The paper seeks to understand the implications the perspective of European integration has on the mobilization of ethnic minorities and to answer the following question: to what extent and in which ways has European integration shaped the mobilization of ethnic minorities in the newly democratic states of post-communist East Central Europe? To this end, an analytical framework is built on rational choice and social movement literature. Two independent variables (Homogeneity and convergence with European Union's policies and expectations) are identified to influence the type of mobilization that will prevail. Three hypothesis are being investigated: a homogeneous country that is EU convergent will have high political mobilization and low non-political mobilization; a heterogeneous country that is not EU convergent will have a high level of non-political mobilization and low political mobilization; finally, a country that is heterogeneous and is EU convergent will have an even level of both types of mobilization. The analysis is based on three case studies which each represent a hypothesis: Hungary (Homogeneous and EU convergent), Romania (Heterogeneous and not EU convergent) and Latvia (Heterogeneous and EU convergent). The analysis reveals that the political structure of post-communist East Central countries is influenced by the presence of the EU which is considered a soft veto player. This confirms all three hypotheses.

**1. Introduction**

Ethnic minorities in East Central Europe have always been a concern for Western Europe, especially since the outbreak of the First World War. This concern has been accentuated with the prospect of European integration and the emphasis put on the compliance of East Central European countries with the Copenhagen criteria, in which the protection of ethnic minorities has been incorporated. The creation of the Venice Commission in 1990 well illustrates this concern. This paper will look at the mobilization of ethnic minorities in the context of European integration prior to the 2004 enlargement round.

Theories of European integration have each tried to explain outcomes and to predict the future, but none of them encompasses or can fully explain the evolution the European community has been going through since the 1950's. They usually offer a partial explanation which accounts for a specific time-period only. Consequently, it is difficult to use these theories to explain the continuous concern for the protection of minorities over a lengthy period of time. Needless to say, the changes occurring in the East Central European region at the end of the 1990's altered the reality faced by their minorities. The possibility for many of these newly independent countries to apply for EU membership has created a unique opportunity for the European community to create a structured framework which would actively protect the ethnic minorities of this region. Previous attempts to do so, such as though the League of Nations had been unsuccessful (Rosting, 1923).

Moravcsik and Vachudova (2003) view the EU bargaining process as one involving gain maximisation for each player involved in the bargaining, in which one of them (the East Central European country) will have to bear higher costs for some time in order to benefit later at other levels. As a result, the candidate countries are in a weaker bargaining position. This framework can explain why the EU-15 has imposed the protection of ethnic minorities on candidate countries of the fifth enlargement round even if they themselves do not adhere to such policies. If we were to use the vocabulary of the neo-functionalists, we would characterize the imposition of such criteria as an "artificial spillover" because it does not originate from a practice of member countries and it nonetheless spills into candidate countries smoothly.

The realities faced by ethnic minorities within the candidate countries changed even within the region. In the case of the Baltic States for example, the Russians that once were a majority became a minority. In the most extreme case of Latvia, they were even denied their citizenship. The other central European countries and Romania each adopted different strategies to accommodate their minorities during their transition from communism. One common issue that faced most of the ethnic minorities in the East central European region is the new triadic nexus phenomenon as explored by Brubaker (1996) and Laitin (1998). The minorities had to develop their own identity while being residents of a nationalizing state and linked culturally to their homelands. It is in this context that the candidate countries had to make compromises to suit the preferences of the EU-15.

The objective of this paper is to answer the following question: to what extent and in which ways has European integration shaped the mobilization of ethnic minorities in the newly democratic states of post-communist East-Central Europe? Based on the yearly accession reports made by the European Commission since the application of the countries for EU membership and on Freedom House's yearly assessments called "Nations in Transit", I will look at the cases of Latvia, Hungary and Romania to better understand the impact the perspective of European integration has on the mobilization of ethnic minorities. I will also comment on how the most numerous ethnic minority groups in each of these countries have used the opportunities created by their national governments and the European Union.

The three case studies chosen for this paper represent the three realities observed prior to the 2004 enlargement, based on two criteria: (1) whether they have converged towards EU policies or not; and (2) whether they have a homogeneous or heterogeneous population – based on the fractionalization index calculations<sup>1</sup>. Each of these cases also represents a specific situation in regard to the mobilization of ethnic minorities. They are differentiated by their level and type of mobilization and they are associated to different levels of costs and benefits to converge with EU expectations. The groups under scrutiny are the Russians in Latvia, who represent 30% of the population, the Roma in Hungary, who are about 8% of the population, and the Hungarians in Romania, that are close to 7% of the population (Clark, 1998; Haug & al, 1998; Tamás, 2005:130; Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, ERRC; HTMH, 2000; Open Society Institute). The classification of the case studies can be summarized in the following 2x2 table:

**Table 1. Hypotheses and Case Studies Classification**

	<b>Homogeneous Population</b>	<b>Heterogeneous Population</b>
<b>EU Convergent</b>	Hungary High political mobilization Low non-political mobilization <i>Low costs, High benefits</i>	Latvia Medium political mobilization Medium non-political mobilization <i>Low costs, medium benefits</i>
<b>Not EU convergent<sup>1</sup></b>		Romania Low political mobilization High non-political mobilization <i>High costs, Low benefits</i>

The paper is divided into four parts. First, we will look at the theories used to analyse the mobilization of ethnic minorities mainly coming from the rational choice and social movements' literature. Then, I will analyse the cases of Latvia, Hungary and Romania according to the framework developed in the first section.

## 2. Framework to analyse ethnic minority mobilization

One assumption made here and presumed to hold throughout the analysis of these case studies is that minorities behave differently than the majority because they do not face the same kind of barriers to mobilization. Diehl and Blohm (2001) have demonstrated this through the study of Turks immigrants in Germany, which have been described as a politically excluded group. Not many authors have written on the mobilization of ethnic minorities or immigrants, and the literature is especially scarce when it comes to the East Central European region. Most of the literature looks at these groups' participation in their society.

The framework used to analyse our case studies is divided in three levels (macro, meso and micro) to look at the different relationships affecting mobilization. First, the **macro level** refers to the analysis of the political opportunity structure (POS) whether it is closed or not and how a group reacts to this structure. Social movements do not mobilize the same way: some are activated by an open POS, whereas others are not because they react to

<sup>1</sup> The hypothesis 4 does not exist because it is not chronologically acceptable.

threats (Máiz, 2003; Tarrow, 1998; Meyer and Staggenborg, 1996). Máiz (2003) identifies two important aspects of the political context which directly influence the success or failure of political mobilization: the first one consists of the institutionalisation of ethnicity, and the second one consists of policies and regulatory strategies applied by governments to ethnic problems and conflicts (Máiz, 2003:201). These elements are concordant with Brubaker (1996) and Latin's (1991, 1998) analysis.

The POS is an important tool to understand the success or failure of mobilization and people's expectations of it (Chappell, 2002:9). Three key dimensions of the POS will be useful to consider: (1) the formal political rules and institutions that creates points of access; (2) the political actors involved (including political parties, interests groups and social movements); and (3) the informal procedures of decision-making and the strategies of those in power (Banaszak in Chappell, 2002:9; Tsebelis, 2002). One way to measure the success or failure of political mobilization through the use of POS is through the observation of policy changes in favour of ethnic minorities.

The impact of institutions for explaining changes in policies through the analysis of veto players as defined by Tsebelis (2002) will be quite important for us in order to understand if we can consider the European Union to have a great impact on the policy changes that have occurred, and what kind of impacts the minority actors can also have in each of the countries we are looking at. Four things need to be taken into account when using the veto players approach: "how are the veto players selected, who are the veto players – who needs to agree for a change in the status quo, who controls the legislative agenda – who makes proposal to whom and under what rule, and finally if these players are collective, under which rule they decide" (Tsebelis, 2002: 76).

The **meso level** of analysis looks at the group and its possibilities for mobilization. Associations have been identified as a source of mobilization reinforcement, independent of their ethnic composition (Diehl and Blohm, 2001: 404). One way to determine whether the group has the resources or not to succeed is to look at the mobilization potential of a group, the ability to form and activate recruitment networks, the arousal of motivation to participate from the group members and the removal of barriers to their participation (Klandermans and Oegema, 1987). Moreover, we can identify if a group has used the processes of frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension and frame transformation in certain situations (Snow & al., 1986), although contrary to social movements, these do not necessarily constitute a condition for success in the case of ethnic minorities.

Olson (1971) brings important nuances to the social movements' literature. He argues that the size of the group also has considerable influence on its ability to pursue the optimal outcome (Olson, 1971: 35). The higher the number of individuals in a group, the higher the proportion of free-riders will be (Olson, 1971: 45). On the other hand, cost sharing appears to be favourable for the achievement of a collective good, and the costs can be substantially decreased by increasing the number of members (Olson, 1971: 37). However, the collective good may be pursued only by a small number of people within the group who have an incentive to work towards the collective good even though they will have to bear the full burden of providing it (Olson, 1971: 50).

Finally, the **micro level** looks at the incentives the individual has to mobilize. We must not forget that groups are formed by self-interested individuals and that unless some means of coercion, incentive or other special device exists, they are not likely to act in a common interest (Olson, 1971:2). Even if he recognizes the well-funded objectives of organizations and the fact that some of its members could act in a common interests it would be wrong to assume that members obtaining a collective benefit from the organization would be willing to pay the cost (Olson, 1971). It is also important to be aware that not all individuals will place the same importance and value on the collective good wanted by a certain group (Olson, 1971: 22). Klandermans and Oegema (1987) make the distinction between collective and selective incentives, which have an impact on the individual's calculations. Collective incentive is greater when the potential for success is present, whereas the selective incentive concerns more the individual and how he/she can be rewarded by his/her participation. The costs/benefits calculations associated to the individual in his decision to participate or not into the collective action can be extrapolated at the collective level by the "tipping game".

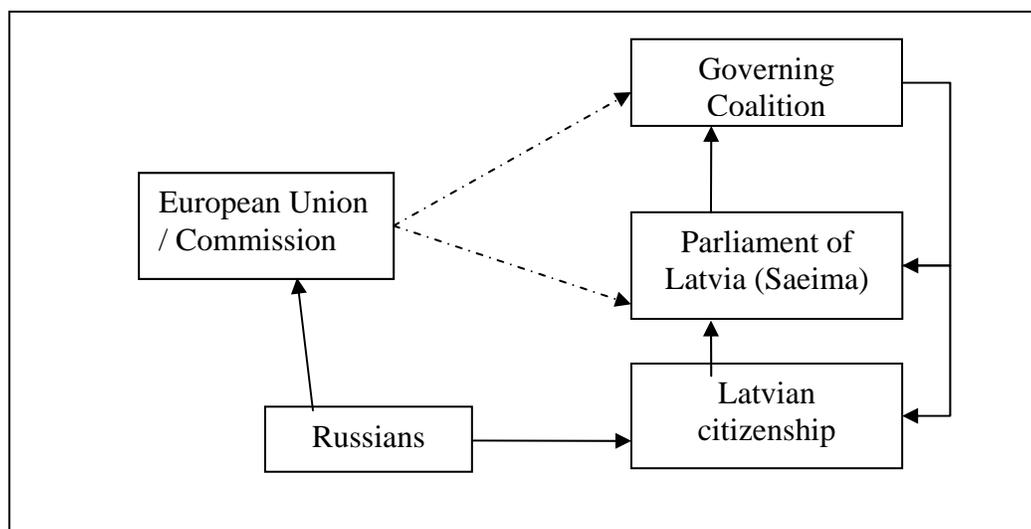
### **3. Russian Mobilization in Latvia**

#### ***Macro Level***

The following figure illustrates the structure of the system and schematizes where the veto points are situated. Many Latvian laws have been adopted with the situation of the Russian ethnic minority in mind on issues

such as citizenship, language, elections, and education. Each of these laws has an impact on the Russian individuals and community in realms such as political participation and education matters. Latvia's attitude towards the Russian minority has been one of exclusion.

**Figure 1. Political Opportunity Structure for the Russians in Latvia**



We have identified two starting points in the game, which also simultaneously constitute veto points in Latvia: the obtainment of Latvian citizenship and the governing coalition. The Latvian citizenship is one of the first veto points exercised by the structure because this is a necessary step to enable Russians to experience their whole range of political rights, such as election of political representatives in the legislative chamber and at other levels. Without this right, they do not have the political opportunity to influence agenda setting. Since more than the majority of the Russian-speakers were not entitled to citizenship rights after the country's independence, they had little influence on political outcomes, as political rights are granted only to Latvia's citizens (Citizenship Law of the Republic of Latvia). In 2001, close to 68% of the Russians did not have Latvian citizenship (FH, Nations in Transit – Latvia, 2001) and that number only decreased by 5% in 2004 (FH, Nations in Transit – Latvia, 2004). For this reason, the governing coalition is also identified as another first veto point in the game because it has the power of agenda setting in parliament, which subsequently enables it to modify laws and policies affecting the Russian minority, notably in regards to citizenship, language and education. Basically, these two elements form a continuous circle.

The parliament constitutes the second veto point, where the preferences of the parties in the chamber fix the outcome depending on the bills presented to the chamber by the governing coalition's own preferences. In parallel, the European Commission has put pressure on the government of Latvia to modify its legislation affecting the Russian minority and has explicitly put the issue of Russian non-citizens as a short-term priority (EC, Latvia Regular Report, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003; FH, Nations in Transit-Latvia, 1998, 1999-2000, 2001, 2002, 2003). The regular reports have been consistently critical toward the government's policies.

The European Commission can be considered close to being a veto player as Tsebelis (2002) defined it, because Latvia must consider and somewhat fulfill the European Union's expectations if it wants to get integrated. For example, the European Union ensures the candidate countries adopt the *acquis communautaires* and different conventions and treaties the way they were originally designed by the EU-15. Moreover, the EU has invested considerably through the PHARE program to allow faster and easier obtainment of citizenship, for example by funding Latvian language courses (in 2003, €5.3 were donated to help fulfil the political criteria) (EC, Regular report – Latvia, 2003). Each time a critique was made towards the Latvian government by the European Commission, the situation was resolved in a compromise between the preferences of the Latvian government and the preferences of the EU in an average 2 years. Thus, the European Union constitutes a considerable veto point in the structure, and its preferences are expressed through its yearly reports. Figure 1 shows the relationships

maintained by each of the actors in the system. We recognize that the Russian population can go directly to EU institutions to influence the outcome either individually, for example in cases of human rights abuse, as it was the case in 2001, or collectively through NGOs transnational linkages (EC, Latvia regular report, 2001).

One important element we need to underline here is our explanation for not having integrated Russia in the political structure. We have not done so for many reasons. First, the Russians in Latvia are not consistently supported by their “home” country: they only sometimes receive moral support when it pleases Russia to do so, and this scattered support is not necessarily in the advantage of the Russian minority (Laitin, 1998). Secondly, Russia is not generally perceived by the European Union to be an admissible future member-state; rather, the EU’s behaviour towards Russia could not be qualified as very friendly. The Baltic States constitute a tampon zone between the West European states and Russia. This situation is important to understand because it brings light on why the Latvian government had the possibility to deal with the Russian minority the way it did for considerable time without being significantly penalized by the EU. It also explains why the Russian minority cannot rely on the influence of its home country to make some gains.

For numerous reasons, we could say that the Latvian political system offers a moderate number of opportunities to its Russian minority. First, a certain number of Russians enjoy their full political rights, thus enabling the group to be represented at different levels: in parliament and at the municipal levels. However, they are not represented proportionally to their number in the population: Russians make up 30% of the total Latvian population and their highest proportion in parliament was achieved in 2002, with 14% of the seats and 4% of elected representatives at the local level, even if they are sometimes concentrated in cities in a proportion as high as 60% (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia). Another important aspect is that the political scene at the national level is divided into two camps: rare are the political parties in Latvia that have not taken position on the issue of the Russian ethnic minority. Interestingly, the political parties that could be considered “pro-Russians” are situated more on the left of the political spectrum, whereas those who are “Russian exclusionary” are located at the political spectrum’s right (Bugajski, 2002). This ensures that the interests of Russians are still somewhat defended even if they do not have one specific party aiming at defending their rights.

In order to evaluate this argument thoroughly, we will look at policy changes in regards to citizenship because it has been the most contentious issue facing the country, and it is also one of the most important for Russians and the EU. This analysis will enable us to evaluate the political mobilization of Russians. The following table offers a summary of the important amendments to the law and identifies the political parties which are members of the governing coalition and those sitting in parliament.

**Table 2. Summary of Amendments to the Citizenship Law since 1990<sup>2</sup>**

Year of the Amendment	Governing Coalition	Other Parliament Members	What was changed in the Law
1991	Pro-Independence Popular Front Movement (not free and fair elections)		Restoration of the Citizenship Law of the interwar period
1995	LC and Harmony for Latvia <i>Minority Government : 49 seats out of 100</i>	LZS, Equality, TUB, LKDS, DCP, LNNK	Establishment of the window system, registration without residence in another state or received an expatriation permit, etc.
1997	DPS, TUB, LC, LNNK, LZS/LKDS <i>Majority Government: 64 seats out of 100</i>	TSP, LSP, LVP, TKL-ZP	Stayed the same, but got more precise i.e. definitions
1998	LC, FF-LNNK, LZS, LKDS <i>Minority Government: 46 seats out of 100</i> <u>Called a Referendum for adoption</u>	TSP, LSP, LVP, TKL-ZP, DPS	Stop the window system, have completed general education in Latvian, and children are able to apply without language proficiency.

If we look at table 2, we observe that the governing coalitions of 1997 and 1998, at the time of the vote for the amendments, were composed mostly of parties that are not pro-Russians, although they were headed by non-hostile parties to minorities (LC and DPS) (Bugajski, 2002). Interestingly, in 1995, although one member of the coalition is definitely pro-Russian, the amendments adopted changing the citizenship law only led to very small gains from the ones dating from the prewar period. This confirms Tsebelis's (2002) argument that the only power minority governments have is agenda setting. In all of these cases the decision-making rule that was prevailing, even within governing coalition partners, was simple majority (Constitution of Latvia). In none of the cases were pro-Russians parties a majority. As it is showed by Tsebelis (2002), the greater the number of political parties involved the greater the possibility of policy stability. This would explain the fact that the modification to the law in 1995 was modest and also increased the chances for the preservation of the current status quo, which explains the situation prevailing in 1997.

The situation of 1995 can be explained by the fact that the governing coalition had decided to act within the winset of the majority of the political parties in the legislative chamber. The modifications represent only small gains for the Russians because it enables a larger part of its group to apply for citizenship, however, it does not represent the optimal outcome. If the Russians were properly being represented in the pro-Russians parties, the end result would have been different. The presence of Harmony for Latvia in the governing coalition probably did not change too much the proposal presented to the legislative chamber, since if the coalition was aiming to gain simple majority, they could have easily done so with a proposal that would have been more pro-Russian and would have secured the support of Equality (which would have represented a total of 56 votes in favour of the amendments). However, this was not the case and a rather moderate proposal for modifications was presented to the chamber, in order to gain the maximum support from the parties in the chamber. The status quo moved only slightly toward the preferences of the Russian population.

The small change from the status quo of 1995 to the one of 1997 can be explained by the fact that many of the parties that were in the opposition in 1995 became part of the majority government composed of an oversized coalition in 1997. Within the coalition, the majority of the representatives are not hostile to minorities (35 seats),

<sup>2</sup> University of Essex, *Political Transformation and the Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe*: 1993 Parliamentary Elections Results (Latvia), 1995 Parliamentary Elections Results (Latvia), 1998 Parliamentary Elections Results (Latvia), 2002 Parliamentary Elections Results (Latvia), URL Address: <http://www2.essex.ac.uk/elect/database>, Last visited November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005 ; *Citizenship Law (Latvia)* URL Address: <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UNTC/UNPAN018407.pdf>, last visited November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005; Siaroff (2000).

although Russian-exclusionary are represented in great numbers (29 seats). Thus, within the coalition, the status quo was preferred over any other proposals. Moreover, Freedom House and the European Commission reported many scandals during this period and divergence among the coalition's members (FH, Nations in Transit, 1998; EC, Latvia regular reports, 1998). This situation probably explains the technical and superfluous modifications that occurred.

The change of the status quo to the 1998 situation is slightly more complex to explain because the political actors were the same, but there was a significant change in the status quo. First, the revision of the citizenship law was brought about because of international pressures. Many international organizations like the EU and the OSCE had pointed out the unwillingness of Latvian authorities to offer adequate opportunities to Russians to obtain their citizenship (FH, Nations in Transit – Latvia, 1999-2000). Thus, the legislative chamber was well aware of the potential consequences of not removing enough barriers for Russians. Inaction could notably have implications on EU membership, which has been a foreign affairs policy priority since Latvia's independence. In this situation, the cost of not modifying its citizenship law was too high. As a result, the coalition presented a proposal that would better reflect the interests of international organizations and pro-Russians parties, which led to a considerable increase in the number of Russians able to apply for citizenship. However, the governing coalition members introduced another veto point for the adoption of the law: a referendum (EC, Latvia regular report, 2000). By doing so, the government strove to ensure that the proposal that would be presented to the citizens would reflect the median voter's preferences; otherwise, it would not be adopted (Tsebelis, 2002). By exploiting the fact that the electorate is composed of a majority of Latvians, the coalition secured a moderated modification to the citizenship law.

Although we have seen that the government did remove some of the greater barriers to citizenship application, others remain. The Russians need to succeed in a history and language evaluation, and pay a high fee for the process of taking these examinations. Freedom House and the European Commission have criticized Latvia for these remaining important barriers, which resulted in the reduction of the Russian population in the beginning of 2000 (EC, Latvia regular reports, 1998 and 1999; FH, Nations in Transit – Latvia, 1998, 1999-2000). Although the number of Russians applying for Latvian citizenship has steadily increased every year since the adoption of the 1998 modifications, two important problems remain: the Latvian passport restricts the exchanges and travels to Russia for their holders since they need to apply for a visa each time they cross the border. Moreover, children covered by the 1998 citizenship law could obtain their citizenship, but not their parents, which rendered travels more difficult and many parents want to obtain their citizenship at the same time as their children (EC, Latvia regular report, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003; FH, Nations in Transit – Latvia, 1998, 1999-2000, 2001, 2002). This situation reflects the unwillingness of the Latvian government to create favourable conditions for Russians to stay in Latvia and foster their group's cultural development, although they are complying with moderation to international expectations.

Another very important issue for Russians in Latvia is in regard to language. The requirement of knowing Latvian for exercising certain professions, as well as for running in the elections, is a barrier for many. The adoption of the language law in 1999 has been recognized to be legitimate by many international organizations like the OCSE and the European Union (FH, Nations in Transit – Latvia, 2001). Considering the time at which this law was adopted, it seems like the government wanted to protect its Latvian citizens from an important Russian political presence and also preserve Latvian dominance in the most prestigious professions (Language Law of Latvia). The Latvian situation is the perfect case to exemplify what Colomer (2001) meant by 'a complex electorate'. Rational explanations can be given to explain the attitude of the government toward the franchise of certain part of the electorate, namely the Russians. The Latvian government benefits from keeping them outside the political structure as they restrict what Colomer refers to as innovation (Colomer, 2001: 14). This situation is explained by the fact that correctly enfranchising the Russians would change the median voter's preference as they represent more than 30% of the population and have different preferences, which could destabilize the system in the eyes of the political parties in power, or rather, drastically change the face of the political system and create different interests. The absence of innovation in the Latvian system is also the result of a non permissive system (Colomer, 2001), which we defined as a moderately closed political structure earlier.

In function of this analysis we could say that the perception of success from the group in regard to political gain would be moderate as they have not been able to sufficiently influence the Latvian government and had to rely mostly on the influence of the European Union on their government to make some gains. The political opportunity

structure can be considered to be moderately closed, as there have been instances of issue advancement, but the Russians are still faced with conditions preventing them from fully participating and mobilizing. The local election results also illustrate this reality.

### *Meso Level*

The pool of the Russian community from which organizations can draw from is very large, as they constitute 30% of Latvia's population, whether they have received their citizenship or not. In this case, citizenship does not necessarily represent an important aspect for non-political mobilization as non-citizens are granted rights at the same level than citizens in all other issue but elections and representation. In that sense, the Russian have a high mobilization potential. Many NGOs are registered in the country as around 7000 organizations in 2004, but 10% are active (Freedom House, 2004), which demonstrate that opportunities are available to Russians and this also maximises the mobilization potential of the group. Although interests are unequal within group members, we believe that the stakes at hand create conditions that unify the group's interests, namely when we are looking at citizenship. Frame alignment is articulated by the positive attitude of Russians that the state of affairs is unacceptable, which results in frame bridging and amplification. Frame extension is reflected at the political level by the division of the party system into pro-Russians and more nationalist parties. Because of this division, we can argue that the Russian minority has been successful in the activity of frame amplification and extension since they only accounted for 14-16% of the chamber in the last two elections that have taken place (Central Statistical bureau of Latvia). This means that they have succeeded in enlarging the pool of adherents to their cause to many Latvian citizens who vote for the pro-Russian political parties. This may have been helped by the dissociation of the Association of Russian citizens from the Soviet Union due to its unwillingness to withdraw its troops from Latvia at the beginning of independence if the republic did not show concerns for the Russian minority (Minority at Risk, Chronology of events). This has created sympathy among the Latvians. Since the presence of the Russian minority is restricted in parliament, the only means available to the Russian minority to influence the government is through demonstration in the streets, especially when international political actors come to Latvia. The Minority at Risk project reflects this reality through their chronology of events. The Russian minority has mobilized around collective issues such as citizenship, education and language.

We cannot claim that the Russian minority has reached its maximum level of mobilization because of the large size of the group, which, as Olson (1971) explained, increases the incentive for its members to free-ride. The perspective that the collective good will be provided even if individual members do not participate is extremely present in this case as the fight is mostly based on the obtainment of political rights, language use and education. Thus, although the collective incentive to mobilize is great, the reality is otherwise.

### *Micro level*

The tipping game has been very important in Latvia for the Russians as the situation involved a change in identity and an adaptation to a new reality which was completely different from the previous one. Each individual had to make a decision on whether they would learn the new language, in accordance to their own cost-benefit calculations (Laitin, 1998). The tipping point represent the position where a sufficient number of people would have choose to learn the new language, providing incentive for others to do so. It also reflects the point toward a new equilibrium, where everyone would learn the language. Obviously, the tipping point has not been reached because the Russian minority is still fighting for the use of its language and the obtainment of services in it. This is also exemplified by the number of Russians that have yet to obtain their citizenship, the modification of the electoral law to enable members of the Russian minority to run in the elections although they do not have a sufficient knowledge of Latvian, or by the number of people that have chosen to send their children in Russian-speaking schools. On the other hand, the Latvian government has made compulsory the learning of Latvian for Russian children in order for them to obtain their general school diploma.

The costs associated with a change in language can be calculated at the individual and the collective levels. At the collective level, it is costly not to learn Latvian since most of the Russians not doing so will not be able to obtain their citizenship, and will thus lack effective representation at the political level. On the other hand, it is also costly not to learn the language at an individual level. Because services are not available in their mother tongue, career perspective and economic well-being are reduced (Laitin, 1998). The only benefit left to the Russian minority for not learning the republican language is the collective identity and unification of the group around their issue. However, the lack of incentives provided by the Latvian government to encourage the change in language use can also explain this situation. However, this harsh reality unites the group.

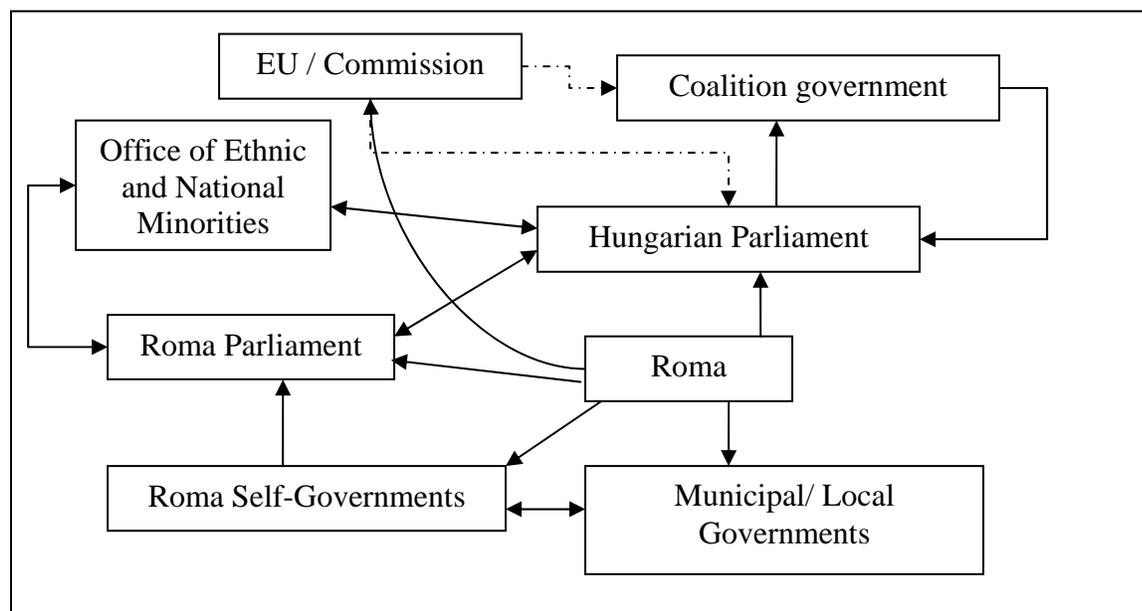
The Latvian case shows that Tsebelis (2002)' findings are correct, meaning that the high number of political actors created conditions favourable to policy stability or prevalence of status quo. Moreover, this approach enabled us to show that the European Union and the perspective of European integration had a considerable impact on the modification of laws in favour of the Russian minority because it offered a "soft veto point". We call it a soft veto point because the European Union does not constitute a veto player *per se* as defined by Tsebelis since its agreement is not necessary in the decision-making process of the country, but has an important level of influence on the decision-making by changing the costs associated with particular decisions. The European Union reinforced the position of the Russian minority within Latvian society by providing its support to them on specific issues, at the political and non-political levels. This situation reflects the linkages existing at the political and non-political levels between the Russian minority and the European Union. Although the conditions are not favourable for mobilization in Latvia, the Russian minority has reached a satisfactory level to make them gain some benefits on particular issues.

#### **4. Roma Mobilization in Hungary**

##### ***Macro Level***

The political opportunity structure of Hungary is probably the most complex of the three countries we are looking at because they have developed a structure to enhance the political mobilization of minorities at governmental levels. The approach towards ethnic minorities is completely opposite from the one adopted by Latvia. Hungary recognizes cultural diversity and the importance of ethnic minority participation in the country, by responsabilizing itself to effectively promote their representation (The Constitution of the Republic of Hungary). The structure is summarized in the following figure:

**Figure 2. Political Opportunity Structure of Hungary for the Roma**



In this case, of course, the starting point is the vote of citizens because everyone has the same political rights. They decide the composition of the municipal government, of the self-governments, and of parliament. The structure offers many opportunities to the Roma to advance their interests, and it is available at all levels. The figure illustrates the different ways the Roma can influence political structures depending at which level they take place and what their interests are.

The government has shown great openness to minorities by creating institutions, which increase their opportunity to influence the government and manage their own issues, mainly related to culture, and by adopting bills to enhance their collective rights. This vision is entrenched in the constitution of the country and various

subsequent laws. Although the power of minority self-governments is limited, regular institutions are held accountable to answer their questions and demands (The Act LXXVII of 1993 on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities). Basically, the minority self-government empowers the Roma minority and ensures that their voice is heard at all levels. The self-governments and the Roma parliament have seen their role and responsibilities toward their community increasing in recent years (EC, Hungary regular report, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003). The Hungarian government basically relies on these institutions to implement effective measures toward the minority. For these reasons, these institutions are considered mobilization bases for the community as they represent veto points in regard to their minority.

The drawbacks of the structure reside in the systemic discrimination faced by the Roma in other areas such as education, employment, housing, etc. and the lack of Roma representatives in parliament until the 2002 elections (EC, Hungary regular report, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003; FH, Nations in Transit – Hungary, 1998, 1999-2000, 2001, 2002, 2003). The European Commission has put particular emphasis on these issues and pointed out that the status quo in that regard was a stain on Hungary's reputation concerning the treatment of its minorities. In most of the reports, Hungary was praised by the European Commission and the obtainment of its international prizes (EC, Hungary regular report, 1998, 1999, 2000). Most importantly, Hungary well respected EU expectations and each time a critique was made in a regular report, the situation was resolved during the following year.

The Roma minority is quite active at the political level. They have been able to create many self-governments passing from 412 in 1994, to 764 in 1998 and finally to 998 in 2004 (Ferenc and Kovács Ilona, 1999: 66; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004: 5). Moreover, 545 Roma representatives and 4 Roma mayors were elected at the local levels in 2002 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004: 9). However, they haven't been able to secure any seats in the national assembly even though four Roma political parties exist and one multi-ethnic party presented Roma candidates in the elections (Bugajski, 2000). Furthermore, parliament decided not to reserve seats to minorities in the chamber, which still defies to this day a Constitutional court judgement on this matter (FH, Nations in Transit – Hungary, 1998: 287).

The first veto point of the structure is the coalition government, which holds the power of agenda setting. Since 1994, the decisions regarding the Roma issues have been quite stable because the political parties have a similar policy agenda: the primacy of the status quo. In fact, Hungary adopted a medium-term plan in relation to the Roma to remediate to the problems they face because of the pressure put by the European Union, through its annual evaluation criticising the government's inaction and implementation of adopted measures (EC, Hungary regular report, 1999, 2000, 2001). The European Union has invested a lot in the consolidation of NGOs in Hungary, particularly those promoting the rights and the protection of minorities.

The minority issue has never been contentious in Parliament. The politization of the representation of Roma in parliament started to take place in the years prior to the 2002 elections. In 2002, the Prime Minister's Office became responsible for the National and Ethnic Minorities Office, and appointed a state secretary responsible only for the Roma (EC, Hungary regular report, 2003). The issue had become significant due to the focus the European Union placed on it. For this reason, the European Union is also a "soft veto point" because the Roma can turn to it in order to gain influence and financial support, but also because the European Union has had an important influence on the Hungarian government which quickly changed the status quo.

The political opportunity structure of Hungary has evolved since the application of the country for EU membership: it has started as a moderately opened structure to become fully opened. The Roma minority has adapted well to this and was ready for it, as the alliances made between Hungarian leading political parties and major Roma organizations in 2001 have shown (FH, Nations in Transit – Hungary, 2002).

### *Meso Level*

The pool from which organizations can draw from when they mobilize the Roma community over particular issues is quite small since they are assumed to be between 400 000 to 800 000 individuals. Because it is against the law to keep records of nationality or ethnicity, it is difficult to know exactly how numerous they are (Tamás, 2005:130; Clark, 1998; ERRC; Open Society Institute). The European Commission numbered the organizations offering support to Roma individuals to about 620 (EC, Hungary regular reports, 2003). These organizations mostly offer services to compensate for the tendency of regular institutions to discriminate against minorities. The European Roma Right Centre has been an organization advocating for the rights and equality of

Romani people in East Central European countries by providing training to different associations and is mostly financed by European funding (ERRC). Even if this organization has played an important role, notably in presenting advocacy papers and researches to many international organizations such as the United Nations and the European Union, this organization cannot take full credit for mobilizing the Roma minority since its board of directors is composed of West Europeans, so too is most of its staff (ERRC). It can be considered to be another service-based organisation, although its service is related to training and not to political and non-political mobilization of Roma organizations.

The mobilization potential of the group is very small since it is difficult for the Roma to change people's attitudes toward them in order to gain their support. Many sources have discussed the persistence of discriminative behaviour against the Roma among the Hungarian population in nearly all fields (ERRC, 1999; EC, Hungary regular report, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003; FH, Nations in Transit – Hungary, 1998, 1999-2000, 2001, 2002, 2003; ERRC; Ringold, 2000). For many decades now, the Roma have been victims of a reinforcing cycle: the portrayal of Roma elites elected as representatives in self-governments is only the peak of iceberg but demonstrates that more than 60% of the Roma only have a primary education diploma, are highly unemployed, which explains why minority self-governments would devote 50% of its grants resources to social assistance and welfare (Ferenc and Kovács Ilona, 1999: 87). However, this reality only reinforces prejudices in the population, as exemplified by the existence of school and housing segregation, violence done against Roma, etc. (EC, Hungary Regular report, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003). The Roma have not used demonstrations as a tool for attaining their objectives.

#### ***Micro Level***

The incentives offered for the individual for non-political mobilization are limited in Hungary. The structure of the Hungarian system is designed in a way that forces the Roma to act politically rather than non-politically. This is indirectly recognized by the European Commission since they have strived to put pressure on the Hungarian government to adopt anti-discrimination legislation which would punish those committing these acts (EC, Hungary regular report, 2001 and 2002). The fact that many Roma face difficult living conditions increases the cost of mobilization because it reduces their ability to better their individual living conditions (economic costs). Moreover, if an individual is identified as a Roma during a demonstration, this could have a negative impact on the individual's short and medium term situation since they are frequent victims of violent acts at the individual level, even from the police.

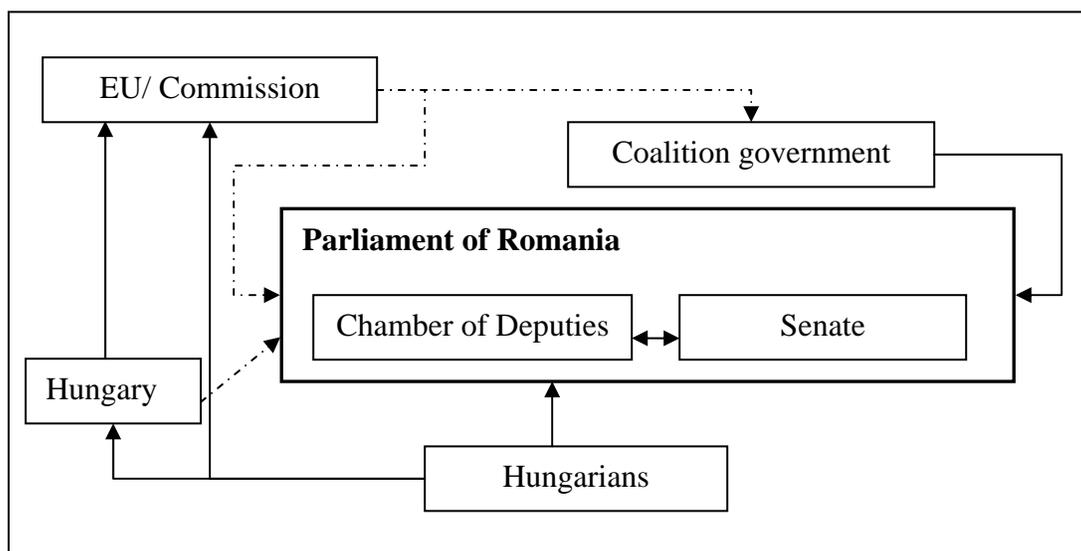
The political structure offers many opportunities for the Roma and could be qualified as being an open structure since 2000, and more particularly since 2002 when the political elites of the two important parties allied with Roma groups to help them secure seats in the national elections. Political mobilization of minorities is very well entrenched in the country's constitution, and the institutions created have mobilized a great number of people around them, which reduces the necessity of non-political mobilization to achieve gains for the group. The European Union has played a significant role in bringing the country to fully open its structure to the Roma and create an additional opportunity for them; that of being elected in the national assembly. The European Union has also pushed for the amelioration of living condition of the Roma, which resulted in the decentralization of responsibility from the government and the creation of official provider agencies to Roma organizations and institutions (EC, Hungary regular report, 2000).

#### **4. Mobilization of Hungarians in Romania**

##### ***Macro Level***

The political structure of Romania is quite simple in comparison to the two other cases. An interesting variable entering the portrait is the presence of a foreign country, Hungary, because the Hungarian government has developed its linkages with Hungarian minorities abroad and tries to ameliorate the opportunities available to them. The following figure summaries the structure:

**Figure 3. Political Opportunity Structure of Romania for Hungarians**



The coalition government constitutes the most important veto point of the structure because it has the power of agenda setting in both chambers. The Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania (UDMR) is the only Hungarian political party presented in the elections and it is constituted of many smaller political parties. The Alliance has become part of the governing coalitions after the 1996 and 2004 elections. However, the influence of the Hungarians on the agenda was still restricted. Table 3 shows the distribution of seats in the Chamber of Deputies as well as in the coalition.

In 1996, the coalition was oversized, which reduced the unity between its member, and more precisely with the UDMR since its approval was not necessary for passing bills in the chamber. Regular decisions are taken under the simple majority rule, which requires the governing coalition to have 173 seats secured in order to make sure bills are adopted in the Chamber of Deputies before going to the Senate. In the aftermath of the 1996 elections, the coalition size was of 200 deputies, which is more than sufficient to forward their bills to the other chamber. Interestingly, the CDR could have decided to form a minimum winning coalition during this election, with the USD only, which would have secured a total of 175 seats but decided not to do so. This situation can be explained by Laver and Schofield (1990) who suggested that political parties sharing a similar policy agenda contributes to their willingness of association.

**Table 3. Distribution of Seats in the Chamber of Deputies since 1996<sup>3</sup>**

1996			2000			2004		
CDR	122	Total in the coalition: 200	FDSN/PDSR	155	Coalition	PNL	64	Total in the coalition: 153
USD	53		UDMR	27		PD	48	
UDMR	25		PNL	30		PUR	19	
FDSN/PDSR	91	Total in the opposition: 143	PRM	84	Total in the opposition: 172	UDMR	22	
PUNR	18		PD	31		PRM	48	
PRM	19		Minority seats	18		PSD	113	
Minority seats	15					Minority seats	18	
<b>Total of seats</b>	<b>343</b>		<b>Total of seats</b>	<b>345</b>		<b>Total of seats</b>	<b>332</b>	

**Table 4. Distribution of Seats in the Senate since 1996<sup>4</sup>**

1996			2000			2004		
CDR	53	Total in the coalition: 87	FDSN/PDSR	65	Coalition	PNL	28	Total in the coalition: 70
USD	23		UDMR	12		PD	21	
UDMR	11		PNL	13		PUR	11	
FDSN/PDSR	41	Total in the opposition: 56	PRM	37	Total in the opposition: 75	UDMR	10	
PUNR	7		PD	13		PRM	21	
PRM	8		Minority seats	0		PSD	46	
Minority seats	0					Minority seats	0	
<b>Total of seats</b>	<b>143</b>		<b>Total of seats</b>	<b>140</b>		<b>Total of seats</b>	<b>137</b>	

The situation is quite different in 2004 for many reasons. First of all, four political parties are involved in the governing coalition, which is the most numerous of all coalitions since the democratization of the country. Secondly, the coalition forms a minority government, which does not secure its bill adoption in the chamber. Rather, its power resides mainly in agenda setting and its secured seats in the other chamber to ensure the legislation adopted is closer to its preferred outcome. Table 4 gives the distribution of the seats in the Senate since 1996. In the case of the 2004 election, the votes of each party of the coalition became important, consequently, the UDMR gained influence in the coalition.

The important nuance to be made is that the Hungarian minority does not really have the choice to run under a single party if it wants to gain considerable presence and influence in parliament. Most probably, if each of

<sup>3</sup> University of Essex, *Political Transformation and the Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe* 1996 Parliamentary Elections Results – Assembly of Deputies (Romania), 2000 Parliamentary Elections Results – Assembly of Deputies (Romania), URL Address: <http://www2.essex.ac.uk/elect/database/indexCountry.asp?country=ROMANIA&opt=elc>, Last visited January 15, 2006; Siaroff (2000); UNPO, 2004 Romania Elections Results, URL address: [http://www.unpo.org/news\\_detail.php?arg=24&par=1567](http://www.unpo.org/news_detail.php?arg=24&par=1567).

<sup>4</sup> University of Essex, *Political Transformation and the Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe* 1996 Parliamentary Elections Results – Senate (Romania) 2000 Parliamentary Elections Results – Senate (Romania) URL Address: <http://www2.essex.ac.uk/elect/database/indexCountry.asp?country=ROMANIA&opt=elc>, Last visited January 15, 2006; Siaroff (2000); UNPO, 2004 Romania Elections Results, URL address: [http://www.unpo.org/news\\_detail.php?arg=24&par=1567](http://www.unpo.org/news_detail.php?arg=24&par=1567).

the parties composing the alliance were going to run alone, they would attain the same level as the other minority parties that have obtained only one seat because the Hungarian minority vote would be divided. In presenting only one allied party, the Hungarian minority maximises the votes and reaches an important number of seats in parliament. Moreover, the restrictions inserted in the reformed 1996 Electoral Law on the number of members required to register as a political party constrain the UDMR to use this strategy (1996 Romania Law on Political Parties). Likewise, the UDMR has experienced a diminution in the numbers of seats allocated to them since the first democratic elections. In 1990, they obtained 29 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, and they were at 22 seats after the 2004 elections. Again, amendments made to the Electoral Law on the threshold can explain the decreasing presence of the UDMR, mainly in the Chamber of the Deputies (2000 Romania Electoral Law).

The amendments to the Electoral Law affecting the representation of minorities in parliament occurred for the first time when the UDMR was in the governing coalition, which confirms the previous analysis. The other changes occurred when the FDSN was forming the government, even though it was faced with a larger opposition. Moreover, no step has been taken by any of the parties to allow for the representation of minorities in the Senate, which would have showed great openness to the minorities by requesting their input at all stages of the legislative process.

The regular use of emergency ordinances by the government slightly changes the game as the parties represented in parliament are not able to present motions or amendments on the bills presented before the chamber. Freedom House and the European commission have consistently criticized the use of emergency ordinances in their reports (FH, Nations in Transit – Romania, 1998, 1999-2000, 2001, 2002, 2003; EC Romania regular report, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004). By using this procedure of decision-making, the governing coalition and most importantly, the leading parties within it, becomes the only political actor(s) that will decide if a bill will be successful or not by making sure it falls within the winsets of the other political parties in parliament.

The growing success of nationalist parties in Romania after 1996, more precisely those who are advocating anti-Hungarian policies like the PUNR and the PRM, demonstrates that the issue of minorities is extremely politicized (Siaroff, 2000). However, none of these parties have been part of governing coalitions, most probably because their presence in the chamber was already straining the relationship between Hungary and Romania, so their part in a governing coalition would have been disastrous. Over time, the nationalist parties have gained more importance than the UDMR in the chamber.

The two domestic issues related to minorities which have probably taken plenty of place on the political agenda are the modification to the education law to allow education in the minority language, and amendments to the law of local administration to offer public services in the minority language where a minority group accounts for at least 20% of the population in a given city (EC, Romania regular report, 1999).

The modification to the education law took place at a time when secured seats in the chamber were equal to a minimum winning coalition: the PDSR/PUNR government secured the support of two other parties (the PSM and the PRM) although they were not part of the coalition. However, the governing coalition would have had to make sure the proposals presented also fell within the winset of these parties. Interestingly, we can observe that the changes in the status quo occurred when the UDMR was not part of the governing coalition. However, the UDMR has not been able to make substantial gains with the amendments proposed. The amendments changed the status quo, but comprised measures for arbitrary decisions by school directors to offer courses in minority language. Certain classes were to be offered in Romanian only but none of these changes and modifications were detailed in the law. Concerning the local administration law, although it could be considered a small gain for Hungarians, it is very restrictive. Rare are cities having at least 20% of a same minority group within their borders. The Hungarians are regionally concentrated in Transylvania, where they form close to 20% of the population. Consequently, the gain was relatively small.

The European Commission has been particularly critical toward Romania (EC, Romania regular report, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004). However, the influence of the EU on the policies adopted by the country is less apparent, nearly none existent. Although Romania has signed and ratified many of the European conventions their implementation has not been respected and this situation is extremely criticized by the European Commission (EC, Romania regular report, 2001, 2002, 2003). The influence of the EU could be illustrated by the status quo changes; however, the gains are limited in all cases for the Hungarians because the governing coalition did not meet

EU expectations in regards to the treatment of minorities. Moreover, one important aspect pointed out by the Commission in every annual report was the problem of corruption in the country. This reality reduces the influence Hungarians can have on the structure because bribery has been used too often to obtain favours (FH, Nations in Transit – Romania, 1998, 1999-2000, 2001, 2002, 2003; EC, Romania regular report, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004).

The perception of success by the Hungarian minority must be low, since their presence in the governing coalition did not offer them more opportunity to advance their agenda than when they were in the opposition. The political opportunity structure of Romania can thus be defined to be closed.

### *Meso Level*

Corruption is identified to be a major problem by the European Commission and affects not only the political structure, but also the social structure and the individuals. It restricts the ability of the group to obtain adequate resources and services required to mobilize. However, the Hungarian minority has been quite innovative and succeeded in mobilizing well at the non-political level.

The legislation on the freedom of press is quite restrictive in Romania, but has not restrained the Hungarian minority from being organized at the information level. Many newspapers at the national, regional and local levels, as well as many periodicals are available to them (HTMH, 2000). The availability of information and its dissemination, more precisely in the language of the minority, is an important starting point to mobilization.

Another important point that needs to be brought up here is the support the Hungarian minority in Romania has from the Hungarian government. No other government has been as supportive of its nationals outside its territorial borders, and its support is not limited to moral support. The Hungarian government has been pushing to obtain an agreement between the two countries that would favour Hungarians in Romania. Two examples are the approval of a Hungarian fully financed university in Transylvania, and the arrangements the government wanted to obtain in regard to social benefits for Hungarians abroad (HTMH, 2000; Edwards, 1998). The Hungarian government has been extremely supportive of Hungarian NGOs in Romania, giving them funding and other support (HTMH, 2000). Thus, the durability of these organizations is increased by this support, which increases their mobilization potential. HTMH (2000) reports that more than 300 organizations have been created since 1989 to support the Hungarian minority in about every range of activity possible (economic development, social welfare, education and culture, etc.). Youth people are particularly active at self-organizing and mobilizing on the issues concerning them, particularly in the field of education. They even offer leadership workshop for individuals (HTMH, 2000).

An interesting aspect of the case of ethnic Hungarians in Romania is their mobilization level and their ability to mobilize although they have not been able to practice frame extension and transformation. They have not been able to do so because they did not need to since they have a political party in parliament which developed alliances with other parties, but also because they have the support of their home country, Hungary, and of the European Union in the protection of their rights. This is particularly surprising considering the obstacles they face to increase their mobilization level. The size of the group is considerably large, which is supposed to affect the possibility for mobilization since many people can decide not to participate. One explanation of the high level of non-political mobilization may be that the availability of collective good is already present by the fact that they support each other and they are supported by the Hungarian government and the European Union through the PHARE programme. They already have access to a certain portion of the collective good.

### *Micro Level*

The individuals need to assess the costs involved in mobilizing in order to find out if they would benefit from a collective action or not. If we take the tipping point in order to explain what is taking place in Romania, we should see that the tipping point has been reached and the momentum exists in order for Hungarians to take their place within Romanian society. The tipping point here would be a change in behaviour from Hungarians minority individuals to further their interests instead of staying in the status quo where they did not obtain any preferential treatment or benefits. The appearance of the UDMR after the first democratic elections created a momentum to unite the Hungarian minority along political issues affecting them.

The leaders of the UDMR have set the stage for mobilization as they made demands on ethnic grounds for self-determination. The Hungarian identity became a tool for these leaders to make demands. This situation encouraged individuals to assert their ethnic differences; the tipping point was reached, and a group movement started to take place. In this situation, the social costs associated with non-mobilization rises because the community is united in this fight.

The information collected leads us to confirm that the Hungarians have used prominently the non-political level to mobilize. This is due mainly to the existence of a closed political structure for the articulation of the demands from the minority, which prevents them from effectively using the political structure. The moral and financial support from the Hungarian government has been one of the strong assets of the minority to further their interest at the political and non-political levels. But this support has been largely effective at the non-political level.

### **5. Conclusion: Explaining the differences of Latvia, Hungary and Romania**

The development of our hypotheses started with two independent variables: EU convergence and the composition of the population. The different degrees of EU convergence have been showed through the evaluation made by the European Commission. The analysis done in the three previous parts of this chapter confirms that the hypotheses elaborated in the first chapter are corroborated, with the available information found and consulted.

To what extent and in which ways European integration shapes the mobilization of ethnic minorities in the newly democratic states of post-communist East-Central Europe? The first part of the answer is that the European Union had considerable impact on the mobilization of ethnic minorities in the candidate countries. We identified its role as a 'soft veto player' in the description of the political opportunity structure expressed in each of the countries we have looked at. Our answer to the second part of the question is threefold depending on the categorization of the case study, and it also confirms our hypotheses: (1) a homogeneous and convergent country with EU policies and expectations has a high level of political mobilization and a low level of non-political mobilization (such was the case of Hungary); (2) a heterogeneous and non-convergent country with EU policies and expectations has a low level of political mobilization and a high level of non-political mobilization (such as Romania); finally, (3) a heterogeneous and convergent country with EU policies and expectations will have an even mobilization level between the political and the non-political type (such is the case of Latvia).

The three case studies illustrate three different ways countries have adopted to deal with ethnic minorities. Latvia has adopted an exclusionist approach, by pushing out or keeping out of the political system the Russian minority. On the other hand, Hungary has adopted a collective rights approach by giving many political opportunities to its different minorities, and the Roma have benefited a lot from it. In the case of Romania, no specific measures have been taken to enhance the participation of the minorities.

We confirmed many of the elements contained in our analytical framework or found explanations on the disparities existing between the types of mobilization used by the different minorities we have been looking at. Diehl and Bloom (2001) point out that the rapidity at which the group obtains their political rights (like the ability to vote in the elections) has an impact on the level of their mobilization, their perception of success in the political realm, and the way they will mobilize. The case of the Russians in Latvia demonstrates this as their level of political and non-political mobilization is less intense than the minorities in Hungary and Romania and they haven't been able to achieve substantial gains in one realm or the other. Rather, the Russians have achieved moderate gains through both political and non-political mobilization.

In all three cases, we have seen how the dialogue between the political actors and the structure took place. It demonstrated in the case of the Russians and the Hungarians that the political opportunity structure was altered by the presence of counter-movements just like Meyer and Staggenborg (1996) predicted. Moreover, all the cases confirmed the affirmations made by Tsebelis (2002), which enabled us to demonstrate the different levels of influence the EU had on the gains made by the minorities in each of the countries, associated with the costs of converging or not with the demands made by it.

In the 2004 enlargement, from the region, only Romania and Bulgaria stayed out of the acceding countries.<sup>5</sup> If we consider the reports done by the European Commission that are reviewed in the second chapter of this thesis, it is not surprising that Romania was kept out of this enlargement. However, it is difficult to understand how Latvia succeeded in entering the EU based on the sole issue of minorities: the country is denying the political rights of many of its minority population and it did not comply with the Venice Commission by signing the Framework Convention on the Protection of National and Ethnic Minorities. Latvia did not sign the Convention until 2005, and many of its Russian population still do not have their citizenship. Actors within the EU are working together to change this situation in Latvia, but it remains difficult since they do not want to step too much into the domestic affairs of the country. One of the explanation generally accepted to defend the entrance of Latvia in the EU in regard to the Russian minority issue is to remove the responsibility of the State to provide citizenship to this population and instead put it in the hands of the Russians by explaining that they are not applying for it since the State removed some barriers. This explanation is confirmed in the last reports done by the European Commission prior to the entrance of Latvia in the EU. In any case, the situation of the Russians remains difficult, even if the Latvian state has entered the EU. The situation remained the same for the Roma in Hungary and the Hungarians in Romania.

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<sup>5</sup> Note that Turkey was also not integrated in the EU

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<sup>i</sup>The threshold for heterogeneity is 1.21.

Estonia	1.88 – Heterogeneous
Latvia	2.38 – Heterogeneous
Lithuania	1.41 – Heterogeneous
Hungary	1.16 – Homogeneous
Czech Republic	1.21 – Homogeneous
Slovakia	1.33 – Heterogeneous
Slovenia	1.41 – Heterogeneous
Poland	1.06 – Homogeneous
Romania	1.25 – Heterogeneous
Bulgaria	1.41 – Heterogeneous