

**Transnational Party Cooperation in Post 1989 Europe:
European Christian Democrats and affiliated parties in East Central Europe**

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This paper will deal with the issue of transnational party cooperation and its consequences for political parties in post-1989 Europe. Since 1990 many attempts have been made to understand the nature of the new parties and party systems in East Central Europe in relation to the “older” party systems in Western Europe. One of the dominating questions has been whether or not the new parties (and party systems) would resemble those in the west. This broad question will be treated here but in a wider theoretical context of Europeanization. Focus is put on the Christian democratic European party family and I only look at the Christian democratic parties (or potential like-minded parties) in Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary.

After an introducing discussion of the importance of the transnational party links and how they have been explored in the earlier research, the paper will present some preliminary results from a case study. It focuses on the European Peoples Party (EPP) and its activities, problems and strategies towards like-minded (and potentially like-minded) political parties in Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary. The study is based on EPP party documents, interviews and some survey data.

First, the main purpose is to investigate *how* the cooperation has affected the EPP-affiliated national parties in the three countries when it comes to party profile and party organization. By comparing the three countries there is also a possibility to say something about the importance of the national context and its historical heritage. Secondly the paper will focus on an often-neglected factor in the studies on Europeanization of political parties: how the European party was influenced by the new strategic situation and its new role after 1989.