

Public Talk Series #2:

# The View From The Inside - European Integration Through The Eyes Of Hungary, A New Member State

By His Excellency Tamás Magda, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Embassy of the Republic of Hungary in Singapore

## Abstract

Membership of the European Union proved so irresistible for Central Europe that no single state of the region ever thought of remaining outside as a real alternative. The result is an enlarged European Union, encompassing 500 million people in 27 countries, and still counting. However, becoming a member of the EU is no joyride. Apart from being a democracy and market economy, applicants have to be able to withstand the competitive pressure of the European Single Market and comply with the enormous volume of the so-called *acquis communautaire*, the legal framework that makes the Union tick.

Arguably, the biggest challenge was to convince the public that sacrifices, painful reforms and adjustments have to be made earlier in order to attain membership at a later stage- a task not to be taken lightly, even though Hungary, along with fellow Central European countries, has always considered herself European. How do you prepare the ground for a momentous change like that, and once inside, is it possible to overcome the sense of self-evidence?

Hungary has been a member since 1 May 2004, but it takes years to fully fit in institutionally and to find our niche areas and roles, where we can contribute to and strongly influence the decisions of the Union. Do we really feel a loss of sovereignty? And how does pooling of the powers of states help to deal with crisis situations, like today's financial turmoil – questions that are not just current, but can present us with experiences and lessons applicable perhaps in other parts of the world as well.

## Details

**Date:** Friday, 14 November 2008  
**Time:** 1.15pm - 2.45pm  
**Venue:** CIT Auditorium, Level 2, Computer Centre,  
NUS Kent Ridge Campus [Map]  
2 Engineering Drive 4, Singapore 117584

## About the Speaker



A career diplomat, Ambassador Magda studied at the Moscow State University of International Relations (MGIMO), before joining the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1994. Initially dealing with Spain and Portugal, he also studied at the Royal Spanish Diplomatic Academy. He has dealt with EU and NATO integration affairs as a member of the Cabinet of the MFA's State Secretary for EU and NATO Affairs, and also worked at the Hungarian Embassy in London for five years as the diplomat in charge of EU affairs, specifically Hungary's accession to the Union. Between 2002 and 2005 he worked as deputy chief of staff of two consecutive foreign ministers. He has been Ambassador of Hungary to Singapore and Brunei since August 2005.

Please email the response form by **Thursday, 13 Nov 2008** to [eucevents@nus.edu.sg](mailto:eucevents@nus.edu.sg) or fax (65) 6774 1445. Thank you.