

Pyramids and the Berlin Wall

Western politicians who supported enlargement of the European Union generally waxed lyrical about spreading democracy, while Western businessmen saw it as a pragmatic way to expand into fertile new markets. The businessmen are still mostly happy, because manufacturing costs in "new Europe" remain lower than at home and consumption of Western goods remains strong. However, some Western politicians are once again showing signs of buyer's remorse. French car makers should bring their production home, Nicolas Sarkozy declared last week. This puts Czech car workers from Kolín on an equal footing with Polish plumbers - Easterners who steal Western jobs. Forgotten, though, is the service that these "Easterners" have shown to the West. Without the fall of the Berlin Wall, the world's current economic crisis probably would have arrived in the West somewhat earlier. The new Europeans were the fresh players who allowed the elaborate pyramid scheme to keep running for a few more years.

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