



THE 12TH EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

**International Relations in the Contemporary World.
Geopolitics and Diplomacy**

The Roots and Implications of Rising the Right Wing in Europe

Hadi Ajili¹, Yoosof Seify²

Abstract: During the last few years, extremist right-wing parties in European countries have found considerable popularity. In comparison with the past, they have achieved more seats in the European Parliament. Meanwhile, their slogans and policies are reminiscent of fascist ideals in the first half of the twentieth century. Before such seizing power, Europe was faced to the global financial crisis in 2007; the event which had considerable effects on politics and economics in Europe, such as the emergence of reformist and protesting movements. With regard to the consequences of the emergence of this trend in Europe on Iran's national security, its impact on the relations between Iran and Europe in the future and the opportunities and threats that will follow, the authors of this paper are aimed to examine the origins and consequences of this issue of power. Theoretically, the framework of the Frankfurt school is taken into consideration in response to how fascism rose in Europe, the financial crisis in the capitalist system and the lack of sufficient strength to deal with it. Thereby, inefficiency and insecurity in the economy lead the society to the extreme right tendencies and provides the groundwork for the formation of fascist states. According to this theory, European governments have not been successful in handling the economic crisis during 2007 - 2009 and the failure resulted in increased popularity of extremist right parties. Also, as the disability of European governments in dealing and controlling the effects of the economic crisis continues, the extrem right tendencies will obscure the future life of European Union.

Keywords: Frankfurt School; Economic Crisis; Right-wing; Europe Union

Introduction

Capitalistic economy faced with various challenges in last years of the previous decade. The begging of crisis started with intensive depression in housing market. This event rooted from incorrect policies of loan giving according to ideas of many people. This crisis showed itself seriously in people daily lives since 2007. Many people lost their jobs or faced with significant buying power reduction, many banks and credit institutions bankrupted, governments incomes reduced, and countries in crisis faced with serious challenge in economic growth.

In addition to this economic crisis, evolutions in other social fields expressed new groups and movements or reinforced some of professional groups as a part of them. Although, the social response to governmental policies for financial crisis in Europe after occupying Wall Street movement and later along with it includes varied intellectual and political movements from right-wing and left-wing, the

¹ Assistant Professor of International Relations, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran, Address: Dehkadeh-ye-Olympic, Teheran, Iran, corresponding author: hadiajili@yahoo.com.

² Student of PHD of Science and Research Branch (Islamic Azad University), Iran, Tehran, Address: Islamic Azad University Arak Branch, 3km road town of Khomein, Imam Square Imam Khomeini , Arak, Iran, Tel.: 086-341324513-9. E-mail: yseifi@yahoo.com.

groups that practically achieve political successes and could increase their powers were extreme right-wing movements.

After financial crisis since 2007-2009, the right-wing parties significantly succeeded in most European countries as they were the biggest winner of Britain leaving EU referendum in 2016. Their empowerment and their made challenge for European states, with any intention, is not limited just to parties' champions. They presented as a social movement in refugee crisis in 2015 and added to its complication. The empowerment phenomenon of right-wing movements in European Union countries can be studied according to various landscapes as left-wing approaches in international policy have tried detailed research about study of capitalistic system crises.

- ***Constitutional Crisis of Capitalistic System in View of Frankfurt School***

Among various contemplations that were expressed in criticism of capitalistic system in Western thought in 20th century, a critical review of Marx ideas and returning to the philosophy of Hegel are significantly important. Attempts of Frankfurt by important characteristics such as Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and now Habermas in criticizing capitalisms and modern society are considered as the most important of these contemplations. Frankfurt or criticism school that is classified in philosophical framework is an approach in reaction to lack of socialistic movements failure in industrial countries and arrival of Fascism system from inside the capitalism of 1930s. This school is actually an inevitably return to attempts for rationalization reality based on Hegel philosophy tradition. (Jay, 1996, p. 259)

The main difference between Frankfurt school and Marx thoughts, as it is attended in Orthodox Marxism, is their deepening criticism about the capitalistic system by considering the positivistic understanding of science, industrialization, and also modernity. This school reviews contradictions in capitalism besides studying issues such as industrial science, world, and technology as formation tools and permanency of capitalisms system, and also searches many crisis resources among such phenomena. This lasts until many people know rebellion against modernism, industry, and technology as one important features of philosophical Marxism of 20th century. (McInnes, 1972, pp. 170-172)

In this school, human society is mentioned as massive life realm or life world including relationship among members by symbolic interaction relying on understanding. This is a condition that was a changed condition in capitalism society and influenced by dominance from understanding to strategic form. This made anxiety in dominated societies by capitalism and a permanent crisis procedure in this system. Actually, what makes defects in today industrial world is domination of the hegemonic system on life world. Therefore, if science moves in its excepted framework can't acts to reach success as blessing, because it is influenced by the caused domination (Bottomor, 2002, p. 36) In this regard, Frankfurt school not only points at the capitalistic system, but also attacks to the collection of elements helping to the permanency of this system apparently or potentially.

When industrial society is discussed in idea of criticism school, it means where human is mesmerized and is in service of industry. Industry and technology play role as the main tools of capitalism with massive production and promotion of consumption culture as the focus of human life world. Conceptions such as alienation are proposed in this condition. The domination of capital makes the maximum possible production of good to be known as supreme goal and influence on various life aspects. Various social life aspects regarding to production are known and used for production in this society.

Horkheimer (1973, pp. 3-20) shows how Marx prediction about the desire of capitalism has accomplished. However, revolution conditions for the capitalisms dominance hasn't been prepared for the extension of new spaces. The welfare state is one of the most important examples of these new conditions. The welfare socialistic state has moved this effective social groups toward inactivity by making false satisfaction among workers; as though, worker cannot be considered as a liberal force anymore. Totalitarianism at capitalism could protect itself against revolution as it succeeded to open "new spaces" in front of itself, and socialisms of welfare state is considered as one of these spaces that were mostly seen after World War II. This usage of capitalism for socialism existed for survival in the first half of the 20th century. This is a recognized policy by governmental support from industry in US and social nationalisms in Europe, Therefore, what is known in Europe as fascism is actually capitalism reaction to the condition that make it permanent against challenge.

Sometimes masses get concerned influenced by constitutional crisis of capitalism as a dominated system and refuge to the charismatic populist leaders and heroes to get free of this stress and express unbelievable destruction and ferocity from themselves by their selected leader guidance. Welfare state is similar to one of these populist or populist political phenomena of 20th century. Although, masses didn't interrupt to the formation of welfare state directly- as for example they acted in revolution movement of Russia in 1917 or about bringing government to the National Socialist (Nazi) in Germany-, they were the main role in formation and growth, of welfare state. (Briggs, 1961, pp. 232-234)

The history of the 20th century explicitly shows social and political evolutions that were rooted from periodic crises of capitalistic system as certification of a great part of scientists' beliefs in criticism school. In this regard, social and political reactions to crisis in capitalistic system has been to the history of this system or intention toward socialism or governments facilities haven't let them provide people wills, and relatively have led to socialisms in supportive political pattern from production or consumption. Later, some crises of capitalistic system are briefly reviewed here.

- ***Reaction Background of European Societies toward Economic political Crises: first half of 20th century***

Arrangement of an international economic system to be able to responding to space after war and its extensive damages after the World War I is the main objective of relationships between American and Europe. Germany debts to and abnormal conditions of this country economically in this period beside British less working and relatively illogical claims of France guided toward the situation that US was inevitable to satisfy on collapsing the dominated monetary system in spite of all attempts of preventing from this crisis.

New York Stock Exchange was so attractive in 1929 that prevented from capital outflow from US seriously. This matter started the great depression with final stop of capital outflow from this country. Germany refused to pay back its previous loans installments for disability of getting new loans. France started changing Sterling Lyrh' to gold and caused Britain gold reservoirs to reduce to international monetary base. Therefore, Britain set gold aside for lack of gold for gold system base in 1931. Anstalt bank was victim of this crisis. The rooted crisis from bankruptcy of Anstalt bank covered all over the Europe, and monetary system finally collapsed. (Kenen, 1989, pp. 404-405)

This big event made a turbulent decade in Western society. Defects in economy and disabilities of governments in responding to the made conditions moved crisis from economic era to political and cultural eras. In spite of all attempts to control crisis, two definite reactions are discernable in western society. US experienced the first reaction for having significant financial resources and also left-wing weakness, and fascisms was born as an output of the existence of two vulnerable countries in Europe.

What is known as welfare state and is mostly a belonged phenomenon after the World War II expressed specifically in America in 1930s. This evolution has been called new deal plan in US economy. Roosevelt put this plant in his agenda after coming to power in 1933. Government tried according to this plan to support agricultural reductions using its resources and motivated productive and commercial agencies. The significant difference between welfare state in US and what was later made in Europe was the importance of production and the manner of injection subsidence to economy. US government succeeded to start its effective supports for producers before arriving to crisis for existence of potential social fields such as civilized society and tooted professional unions. In this plan, before attention to consumers and governments service abilities, using ^{irickle down}, the ability and possibility of new and more employments, and also necessary legislations to supply active participation of workers in economic activities extension process were mentioned, while welfare state has been seen later by symptoms such as government extensive entrance to social services field.

At the same time, Europe faces with various problems to confront with crisis. Economic crisis in Europe brought red decade literally (Maniferd, 1974). It seems that socialisms were the only possible response to economic defects. European countries beside political tensions and involvements faced with the problem of financial resources. Italy and Germany were considered as the most significant points of crisis. War imposed heavy losses on people in Italy and didn't have significant benefit. The annual income of this country hardly equaled to Britain income at the beginning of the 19th century. These economic problems made government face with failure in fairly division of grounds among the retuned soldiers from war which led to the extensive uprising in this country. (Cohrs, 2006, pp. 21-26)

Germany condition was relatively more critical. Germany lost its all colonies which had significant role in its economic system. In addition to colonies, parts of soils particularly industrial part of Germany were arranged as recompense to France. The main problem for economic life continuity of this country was paying war recompense. This matter reduced the value of Mark currency and inflation increased. (Stackelbeg, 1999, pp. 69-74)

Fascism in Italy and its German version in its territories was the only accessible response to this pervasive crisis. This response was made from the indebted and emaciated governments' deficiencies and also the nightmare of communism. The extreme right-wing parties could empower first in Italy using public dissatisfactions and established its favorite security system. This movement in Germany empowered by national social by goal of removing the roots of defects. German industrial society determined the causers of the current condition more than leaning on social classifications structure. The glorious past myths was drawn by a mythical purity of the ethnic people for both countries. They were angary of individual reputation in liberalism and knew this level is individual independency and progress interruptive. Capitalisms in US succeeded to survive economic society from crises by injection financial resources. However, this system was indebted and penniless in Europe crisis and didn't find solution except totalitarianism.

- ***Crisis Continuity and Fascisms Life after World War II***

Although, fascisms lost its political power after World War II in Europe, the root of this movement gave life in western society to fascistic and semi-fascistic groups and parties. Fascism returned to its social bed after the fall of Hitler and continued there this social bed accepted fascistic movements' life for defects of capitalistic system. In other words, the small and various crises of capitalistic system justified parties which definitely appreciated Hitler totalitarianism or Mussolini, and knew themselves related, or ideas of both systems were significantly in their ideas and beliefs. (Look at Hedges, 2007)

After the World War II, US experiences about crisis control was intended by Western European countries, and welfare state was born in Europe. This form of state was first intended in Britain and then it was used by other countries influenced by Marshall Plan and the fourth principle of Truman. Welfare state in Western Germany was established in 1950s and then was intended as an essential and inevitable policy in France, Italy, and other members of Europe economic cooperation organization. This approach was selected in European countries beside tangible necessities of after-war period that was significantly influenced by US economic helps.

However, effects of European states actions can't be neglected in crisis control after 1945, and their passage by communism danger can't be considered unimportant, the protest movements in 1960s showed that this types of actions couldn't establish social stability in spite of significant costs that were imposed to states. Hippies, rappers gender movements, and environmentalists were the groups beside neo-fascists and extreme left-wings challenging traditional dissidents of capitalistic society.

Most of these movements such as hippies movement, that were later changed to tiny culture in the world, or other extreme movements who complained to the presented conditions were born in 1960s. Rock music found most of it fans in this decade and Hippies attempts in attracted people for the first time in Heath - Ashbery San Francisco district in 1966-1967 and May, 1968 movement of France that was formed beside workers movement and finally changed as a complain symbol against capitalistic relations. These movements happened 20 years after World War II, and capitalistic society had experienced significant experience of stability during these years. (Jobs, 2009, pp. 378-380)

Necessary conditions for rethinking in capitalistic elements were prepared more than any other time in 1960s. However, this rethinking before showing itself in political parties such as Marxism way of fighting has expressed in social bed by extreme approach. Fascist and neo-Fascist movements also returned to the western political life again for the first time after war in this decade. Extreme right-wing parties could express themselves again in Greece by military empowerment. Neo-fascism of Italian military organized a coup against government in 1964; although, they failed, this announced such serious approaches in Europe.

However, confrontation of capitalism and dominated political systems in west with protests in 1960s was is a way that these movements, even with success in their social bed, couldn't take political power effectively. The most important anti-capitalisms events during Cold War were European movement of May, 1968 that only could create effective symbol for combating. Labor unions as one of two main parties couldn't protect their loyalty toward student activists belonging to modern liberal and pacifist groups. Their reconciliation with the government of General de Gaulle shows great weakness of left-wings in Western Europe of that period. Dissidents' threat led to a limitation out of political power of capitalism reinforcement in 1980s. Capitalism system in two last decade of the previous century was in a situation that was considered as the maximum level of accomplishment for economic liberalism desires.

It seemed at the beginning of 1980s that welfare state wouldn't be able to respond western capitalistic needs. Creating a crisis situation of "guiding capitalisms" in 1970s and 1980s, particularly economic improper conditions, and daily increasing inflation besides significant defects in social era caused this imagination that was time traditional liberalisms experienced its existence fully for another time. Regarding to this attitude, a process started in western economy called "structural adjustment". Regarding to this plan, if western sub-governments had turned back following parties pressures from some liberalism principles, they had returned to the 19th century's economic liberalisms principles this time called "neo-liberalism" by inefficiencies experiences in combats against capitalism.

European advanced governments rebelled gradually from paying welfare services collections based on welfare state for accuse of resulted damages by debts crisis. Actually, neo-realism was designed and implemented as anti-government mechanisms ten years before giving back all of international fields from its traditional competitor. Privatization and liberalization that mean reduction in government interruption in economic affairs and liberalization market freedom in social fields by leaning on principles of traditional liberalism, accelerated in industrial countries and its implementation was recommended to the third world countries by international financial institutions such as the World Bank.

In 1980, Ronald Reagan found way to the White House as tight-wing pioneer. He won against his democratic competitors when he introduced his slogan as an extreme conservative. Reagan started neorealism wave in west that was called Reaganism later and could continue to one more decade after the beginning of 21st century in US. This movement started in Europe by prime-ministry of Margaret Thatcher in Britain. Reaganism was considered the leader of parties who knew the right-wing policies as solution of crises at that time both in US and Europe definitely. Although, these crises rooted from many cases in economy, the arrival of critical movements showed their threats toward social culture significantly.

Liberalism of economy and resetting of free market based on unlimited extension of the great commercial companies, and consequently intensive economic inequity are significant sign of Reaganism in reaction to the condition in which capitalisms future is faced with threat in industrial countries, while governments' services started reduction that was the first time after the World War II that right-wing could empower with this volume of effectiveness in west. (Williams, 2003, p. 44)

Neorealism started in 1980, continued to 1990s after the Soviet collapse with the power of George W. Bush in 2001 in US, and subsequently right-wing parties showed in Europe that was proposed as a significant and undeniable approach in the industrial world in spite of all problems. That was an approach as the most important reason for the recent economic crises according to the ideas of some observers. According to their ideas, the occurred crisis in 2007 and cause of instability in financial markets and credit institutes in an industrial countries was an event caused following full dominance of global neoliberalism in 1980s. (Dumenil & Levy, 2011, pp. 1-2)

- ***Financial Crisis in 2007 and Social Response of European countries***

Many people knew tendency of financial markets to anti-regulations in the past decades in US as starter of the great financial crisis in 2007 (Farzinvash and Barkhordari, 2010, p. 118). Simultaneous with these changes considered equal to neoliberalism, interest rate decreased by federal and American banks significantly changed their financial resources supplement ways for mortgage loans. They intended to housing mortgage in bond market. This model makes more cash possible for customers of banks. Banks got installments from housing mortgage loan receivers and intended payments to the owners of bonds. Therefore, caused risks by giving loans were transferred to stock exchange. Crisis started when creativity of the mortgage loans that was called mortgage loans grade 2, housing production increased significantly and supply exceeds on demands. This event made depression inn housing market and subsequently houses values didn't justify installments payments by buyers. Significant numbers of buyers using housing mortgage, grade 2 refused to pay their installment in 2007. Based on law, their property was given to loan provider financial institutes for auction to supply customer debts. Resupplying the auctioned houses increased the made distance between supply and demand and led to crisis more complication. (Acharya & Others, 2009, pp. 93-96)

Crisis was continued to other industrial countries rapidly, and Europe was its first destination. European Union also proved financial help package of 200 billion euros of course later than US to support

economy of 27 countries. Western governments started coordinated actions by this assumption that crisis is controllable by government. These actions were effective on people daily lives Europe more than any other places. Economic austerity policies made dissatisfaction wave among US and European people. However, US formally announced in June, 2009 that depression finished and the made defects would remove soon. The European countries smoothly felt the effects of positive economic growth at this time.

Greece was the first country showed calculations inaccuracy. This country announced at December that it had 300 billion debts. Greece crisis provoked concerns about economic future of EU. Later, EU warned again to France, Spain, Ireland, and Greece about reduction in budget deficit, and it was indicated that crisis was not only attributed to Greece. At the begging of 2010 and crisis continuity, EU selected more rigid policies about the involved countries in crisis. This union announced by condemning Greece accounting system that government budget deficit of this country reached to 12% domestic gross production. It is quadruple of the determined roof for Euro areas members. One month later, Greece put economic austerity plans n agenda by aim of reduction in budget deficit in order to reduce foreign pressures. This action not only didn't lead to crisis reduction, but also led to political inflammation in this country. All this time, the devaluation of the single currency of Europe, euro, continued and some European countries, particularly Ireland faced with difficulty in sale of their bonds in market. Crisis continuity beside austerity policies and pressures increase to mean level people made extensive protests in US and Europe. The peak of these protests expressed in occupying Wall Street movement. In September, 17, 2011, US youths protests extensively in Wall Street in New York for the dire economic situation, US class differences, and current policy of this country. In this aggregation that was very peaceful and without anger by protesters, they asked US people to join them for protest against US government policies. This action of US youths was intended by other protesters to protesters of other industrial countries, and the occupying Wall Street movement didn't limit just to US. This movement will titles such as 99% asked governments not to put the made pressures on ordinary people by condemning big financial institutes and significant economic agencies which were maker of this crisis.

Occupying Wall Street movement continued to capitalistic economic system in protests after a wall to the great areas of the world. European countries were the first host of this movement after US. This figure was 21 protests in October and November in Britain. 200,000 people participated in protest of October, 15 on Rome.¹ Figure (1) shows the protest aggregations of occupying Wall Street in 7 EU-membered countries.²

¹ <http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2011/10/16/come-previsto/164205>.

² http://www.cadtm.org/IMG/pdf/World_Protests_2006-2013-Final-2.pdf.

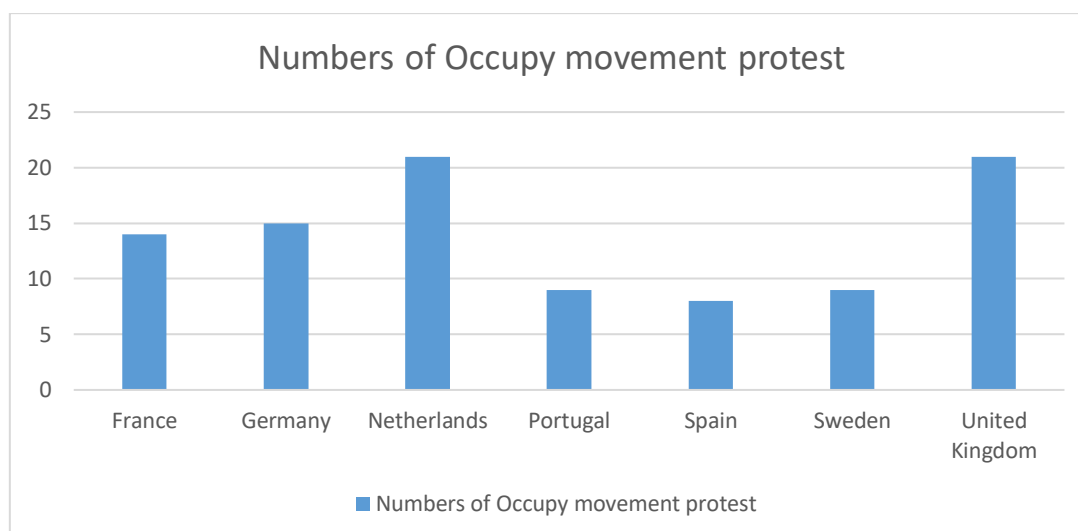


Figure 1. Numbers of Occupy movement protest

Movement progress in EU is analyzable as a sign of EU governments; response failure to crisis consequences in 2007. Brown Gartner shows how governments' facilities in industrial countries, particularly Europe face with crisis with serious limitations to respond effectively. European countries don't have power of providing effective helps and facilities to economy after crisis. He explains that arrival of new powers in international economy, particularly their empowerment in international monetary and financial organization framework cause limitations for European governments to provide helps in future. In addition, economic crisis reduced industrial countries status in international economy. Such landscape showing power transfer in international political economy is proper condition to continue crisis in developed countries. (Gartner, 2010, pp. 208-210) Governments' disabilities in responding to economic concerns are a significant factor in making condition of right-wing parties' empowerment who didn't participate in power for their extreme views. This process intensified after Greece crisis and after than by refuge crisis in EU.

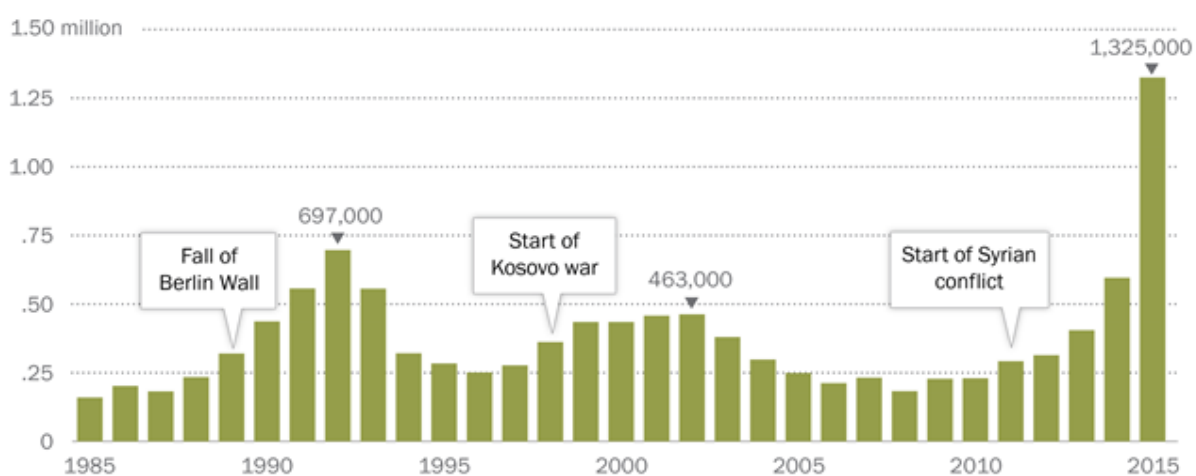
- ***Empowerment of Right-wing Movements and Refugees Crisis***

Middle East turbulence in 2013 and 2014 led to unpredictable increase to refugees demand to Europe as 150,000 demands in 2008 reached to 1,023,000 demand in 2015. This increase changed to crisis when EU faced with problem in a responsible decision for the issue. Reaching to one comprehensive decision faces with problem for boundary countries' concerns in south and east of EU, and these countries followed decisions of EU about how to face with crisis. The main issue was attribution of refugees that EU must have divided among its members to manage refugee demand increase. Figure (2) shows crisis development in 2015.¹

¹ http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/08/02/number-of-refugees-to-europe-surges-to-record-1-3-million-in-2015/pgm_2016-08-02_europe-asylum-01/.

Number of asylum seekers in Europe surges to record 1.3 million in 2015

Annual number of asylum applications received by EU-28 countries, Norway and Switzerland, 1985 to 2015



Note: "Europe" consists of the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland. Asylum seeker definitions varied by European country prior to 2008. Numbers for asylum applications since 2008 are based on first-time applicants and do not include appeals or transfer of applications between countries. See [methodology](#) for more details. Data on asylum applications is missing for some countries in some years. See [Appendix A](#) for list of countries with missing data. All countries that are part of the EU today are included in previous years' data even though several were not part of the European Union in earlier years. Rounded to nearest thousand.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Eurostat data, accessed June 22, 2016.

"Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 2. Number of asylum seekers in Europe surges to record 1.3 million in 2015

Dublin Convention that was signed in 1990 executed in 1997. Summarily, it is written in this convention that each refugee entering to the territory of EU must apply for refuge in the first membered country of this union. This crisis led to collapsing Dublin convection as an event happened under pressure from a flood of refugees from Africa and the Middle East who passed Mediterranean and entered to Italy, Greece, and recently as an extensive migration from Syria to Hungary and Bulgaria. Some countries like Germany, Belgium, Denmark, and Sweden accepted to anticipate more applications of refugees. Other countries like France made obstacles in its southern boundaries to prevent from refugees to north. Hungry right-wing government made a fenced and prickly wall on the border with Serbia, and police force of this country was criticized by public thought for misbehaviors with refugees. (Dalakoglou, 2016, pp. 183-185)

Based on Dublin law, this country must prevent from massive entrance of refugees to EU. This country was obliged to survey who entered to its boundaries, and start the process of refuge application for who it imagined escaped from war or suppression. However, this country didn't have efficient facilities and readiness to do any of these cases. Britain was exceptional of EU immigration policy. This was the main approach of Cameroon government against crisis. European convection accepted this argument technically. Therefore, London announced that it would accept more Syrian refugees but not among whom reached to Europe since then. Giving asylum to these refugees encourages human trafficking groups and more refugees to dangerous marine trips to reach Europe. (Banulescu-Bogdan & Fratzke, 2015)

Finally, European countries could agree with Turkey that is acceptable for all members of convection. In framework of this agreement, the refugees were guided toward Turkey territory, and who succeeded to pass Turkey, were returned there again. A refugee stayed in Turkey during application and decision. The number of direct asylum to EU countries reduced after execution of this plan and some hopes appeared. However, crisis lasted its effects in EU. The most important effects of crisis are evaluated as EU damage points. These effects about EU horizon were analyzable like a convection of countries above all based on collective benefits.

EU faces with a serious question economically and signs of security aspects expressed for economic issues in EU. After finishing Europe annual budget for refugees and government obligation to pay in this field, EU structure was inefficient in providing necessary supports. Rich countries of EU such as Germany just faced with criticisms of right-wing groups. However EU or right-wing government had power in weaker countries such as Hungary, or right-wing movements significantly influence on governments' policies about it. That was happened in most European countries. Strengthening of nationalism in EU-member countries is considered as another consequences of this crisis. Governments moved toward strengthening their national benefits against mass benefits in this crisis. Actually, they prevented from execution of EU formal agreements by referring to national benefits. This divergence continued since EU members accused each other to break the initial commitments. For example, Hungary complained formally about breaking its governance y Romanian boundary forces. Issues including security of EU boundaries and their powers to accountability while crisis are other effects of this crisis. (Veebel & Markus, 2015, p. 258)

Important points about refugees crisis and its destructive effects on EU includes role of right-wing parties in this crisis. These parties developed their powers in European countries more than ever in 2007-2008. This empowerment development and its landscape is one of the most significant factors of failures against refugees' crisis according to many people ideas. Maria Skora (Skóra, 14 Januar 2016) indicated that right-wing parties and populist had significant development, particularly in central Europe. This movement got the government control in Hungary in 2010. Fidesz conservative party in Hungary succeeded to win the most parliament. In addition, Eubic extreme right-wing party with radical slogans could win for the first time to present in parliament. "Sweden party" as a right-wing party could reach 5/7% of parliament votes and found way to the parliament of this country. Right-wing parties had similar conditions in European countries in 2010 and 2011. "Real Finland" party in Finland was people's party in Denmark, freedom party in Netherland, and "national front" in France are parties which could develop their political power in years after financial crisis.¹

The empowerment procedures of right-wing parties continued to 2015, when was the escalation of refugee crisis. They won significantly in Europe parliament election in 2014. France national front won 25% of votes by achieving 24 seats. The UK Independence Party that was led by "Nigel Farazh" won 23 from 73 seats of European parliament, and Sweden right-wing party won more than 10% of votes.² Totally, right-wing party succeeded in this election to increase their sears from 32 to 45 in EU parliament under the title of "Free and democratic Europe".³ Right-wing party significantly exceeded from the dominated party in Poland by wining 39% of votes in Poland parliamentary elections. The alternative

¹ <http://www.dw.com/fa-ir/%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%DA%AF%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B7%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%BE%D8%A7/a-15273039>

² <http://www.viewsoftheworld.net/?p=4133>.

³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/democracylive/europe-33332656>.

left-wing party for Germany could win 24% of votes from three provinces of Saxony-Anhalt, Baden-Württemberg, and Rhineland-Palatinate in 2016.¹

Figure (3) shows right-wing party growth in two previous parliamentary elections in 8 EU-membered countries. A shows parliamentary attribution percentage of right-wing party since 2010-2013. B shows their votes in the last parliamentary elections of these countries since 2014-2016.²

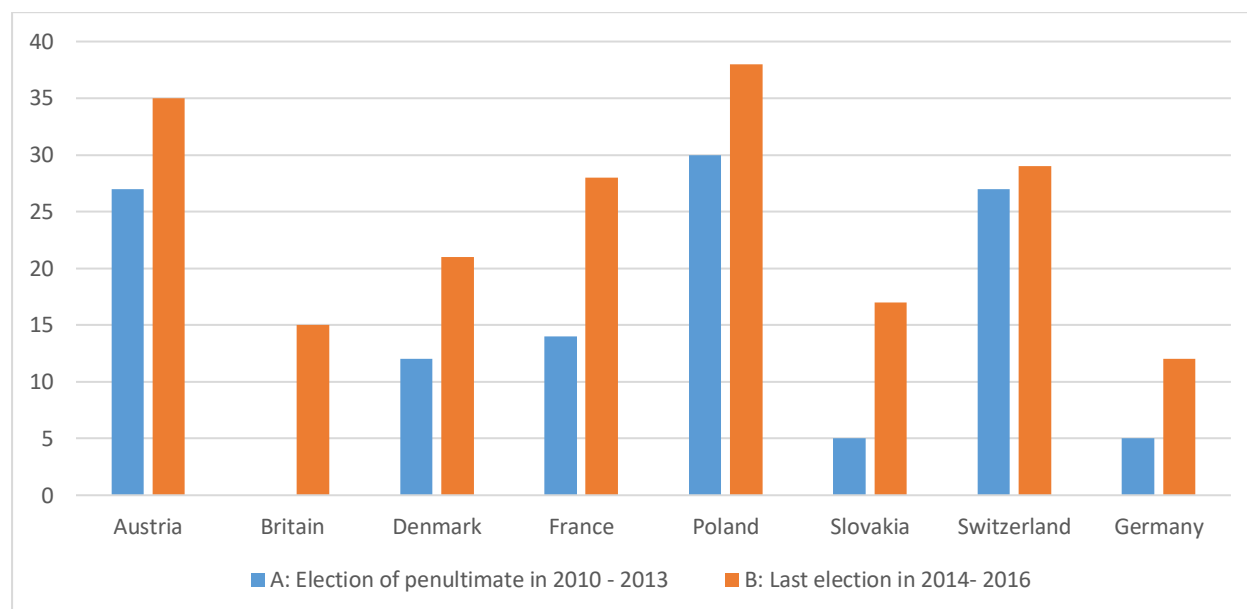


Figure 3. The 2010-2013 & 2014-2016 elections

Right-wing growth in Britain was significant more than other EU-membered countries. They won significant results from parliamentary elections in 2014 and could maximize their supporters since referendum 2016. This was the beginning of a new crisis after refugee crisis. In referendum at June, 23, 2016 in Britain, more than 17 million people vote to absence of that country in EU (In contrast, more than 16 million people vote to exist in EU), and Brexit movement succeeded. Referendum for Brexit was a part of the dominated party's election agenda by leadership of David Cameroon, the prime minister in 2015 parliamentary elections. This approach is analyzable according to social capacity of right-wing party and its attention to elections in 2014. Cameroon didn't know Britain membership in EU fairly in electoral positions framework and said that he would try to reach better conditions, then people would be asked to share ideas about membership in this union.³

Opponents of membership in EU believed that the approved laws of European institutions mean denial of the sovereignty of the British parliament and imposed improper regulations for business in this country. They know membership dues, Britain attribution in EU budget, as wasting people resources of this country. It was said that this budget could improve internal facilities such as ones in health and care centers. Immigration of other EU-membered countries citizens to Britain was one of the most important opposition topics to continue membership. As opponents said: freedom of entrance and residence of

¹ <http://www.dw.com/fa-af/%D9%85%D9%88%D9%81%D9%82%DB%8C%D8%AA-%D8%AD%D8%B2%D8%A8-%D8%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA-%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%DB%8C-%D9%88-%D8%A2%DB%8C%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%87-%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA-%D8%A2%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D9%82%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84-%D9%85%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%B1%DB%8C%D9%86/a-19115050.>

² [http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/05/22/world/europe/europe-right-wing-austria-hungary.html?_r=0.](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/05/22/world/europe/europe-right-wing-austria-hungary.html?_r=0)

³ [http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-32810887.](http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-32810887)

European citizens made extensive immigration of cheap workforce from many low-income countries, particularly to East Europe. This matter not only got job opportunities from internal force. But also immigrants entered double pressure on facilities for using social facilities.¹ These arguments were accepted in Britain according to many experts of neo-nationalism empowerment. This procedure was passed in 2014 and 2015 more than ever according to propaganda independence party of Great Britain and movements such as “first Britain”. This propaganda happened with centrality of opposition to immigrants and EU policies in benefit of Britain.²

- ***Acceptance for Right-wings, Financial Crisis Consequences***

Right-wing procedures have been reinforced by fascism approaches in Europe after Brexit. Ultranationalists felt proud of their victims in Europe and promised similar future to their countries. Dutch freedom party leader, in Dutch is Partij voor de Vrijheid, (PVV) from right-wing parties wrote in his personal Twitter immediately after financial result of Britain referendum that the Dutch also have the right to hold referendum. Jeroen Hukeh, the boss of alternative fraction party of Germany (AFD) asked for similar referendum in Germany in Thuringia. Hukeh said that the Britain left the collective madness and voted to people governance and democracy by leaving the Union Europe. Marine Le Pen, French national front leader, wrote immediately in his twitter after the final result of similar referendum in Britain: victory of freedom! As what I wanted years ago similar referendum must be held in France and other European countries. Swiss People's Party (SVP) talked about deep gap among political elites, and people in related affairs to EU and the leader of the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) knew the result of Britain referendum opposite to “political centralisms” and refuge policies and wrote: if EU didn't choose comprehensive and deep modification procedure, it would damage.³

If was also said that expression of racist tendencies in Britain and some other countries increased. According to report of Time Newspaper, Britain police called 331 crimes with hateful motivation in a week after referendum. The average of this statistics in a week after Brexit was 61 cases. These crimes happened against immigrants before all. For example, agents curse the foreign-born citizens, prepare physical attacks against them, and broadcast anti-foreigner comments on social networks and night letters.⁴ Analyst Guardian believed that what made the result of Britain elections and success of right-wing movements is the result of people distrust on the main and traditional movement in power.⁵ This condition made right-wings change themselves leader of opponents and critics of present conditions by staying far from raciest elements and focus on identity issue.

Racist slogans on the identity issues found opportunity of extensive advertisement. Extreme right-wing populism approach played more effective role in empowerment continuity in gap between governments and people or between EU and Europeans. In most European countries, from one hand every political parties, including the Communist, Socialist, Green, center-right, etc. and right-wing one the other hand were as the only anti-structural force and the only hope to change in political scene.⁶ Consequently, governments disabilities in response to public demand along with making trust among voters would be the most important factor in Right-wings' empowerment in future of Europe. Economic condition among what can be studied as efficiency of dominated parties in Europe is response to social and welfare demand.

¹ http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/abubakar-kasim/brexit-right-wing-extremism_b_10705426.html.

² <https://theconversation.com/britain-exits-the-eu-how-brexit-will-hit-america-61412>.

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/24/european-far-right-hails-britains-brexit-vote-marine-le-pen>.

⁴ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/racism-hate-crimes-increase-brexit-eu-referendum-a7113091.html>.

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/25/across-europe-distrust-of-mainstream-political-parties-is-on-the-rise>.

⁶ <http://www.tisri.org/default-2197.aspx>.

Based on pioneer views of Frankfurt school in 1950s-1960s, capitalism system being critical between two global wars was led to fascism arrival by right-wing tendency increases, and formed socialisms of welfare state after the World War II. Arrival condition of welfare state was accomplished when European governments had desirable economic growth that was able of paying governmental costs with this level of welfare. Increase in right-wing movement in 1970s happened when taxpayers dissatisfied with the offered services by government. At this time, crisis started and reduction in government costs was considered as the only possible way. After financial crisis in 2007, the continuity of government disabilities in economic fairly management led to reinforcement of right-wings. Governments' disabilities in responding to society demands were the most important condition to appear extreme right-wing movements after crisis. Events such as Greece crisis, refugee crisis, Britain leaving from EU show European governments weakness in periodic crisis consequences management in 2007.

As the dependent research to social democratic faction in Europe parliament showed that "extreme right-wing empowerment is analyzable in European societies concerns, these social concerns or stress happened and developed after economic crisis. Actually, collection of crises with social, political, economic, and particularly identity issues led to progress of extreme right-wing acceptance among voters. These are like the developed crises after economic crisis consequences in 2007 and as a result of governments' disabilities in its control.¹ For example, some authorities believe that capitalism economic crisis reduced benefits such as convergence - hope make more profit - in the framework of the Union such as the Europe Union. These contradicted conditions are discussed in issues such as identity crisis and populist slogans progress.²

Conclusion

Contemplations of the pioneers of the Frankfurt School in collection of their responses to failure of Marx predictions about capitalism system crises refer to explanations about escapes in the system to avoid socialist revolution. Two experiences of fascisms by influence of economic crisis in 1930 and welfare state in 1960 were studied in works of critical school thinkers, and were analyzed along with avoidance capitalism system from revolutions. In this regard, lack of economic conditions to form social political economy increased capitalism system intention toward fascism or extreme right-wing. This conditions led to empowerment of Hitler and Mussolini after crisis in 1929. Empowerment of extreme right-wing movements in Europe in current decade is analyzable as consequences of 2007-2009 financial crisis.

European governments disabilities against financial crisis effectively led to some consequences in EU in last years if the previous decade. Public protests to capitalism economic structure during the occupying Wall Street movement and continuing crises such as the economic crisis in Greece to victory of Great Britain's leaving plan from the Europe Union in 2016 are analyzable on global consequences bed during 2007-2009. Actually, crisis showed limitations of European governments for extensive economic helps. It intensified limitations of nationalism resources and the divergence of the Union in the European societies. Empowerment of extreme right-wing parties is analyzable in this framework in more EU-membered countries.

¹http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/sites/default/files/position_paper/Rise_right_wing_extremism_populism_europe_en_140416.pdf.

² For example, refer to: <http://euroacademia.eu/presentation/the-european-economic-crisis-revitalizing-national-identity-through-political-cartoons-and-images-2/>.

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/european-institute/docs/greece_seminar_brochure.pdf.

Studies have shown that tight-wing parties got great successes in election fighting during 2010 to 2016. They also continued their social activities. Their persuasion power to persuade Britain people for positive pole to Brexit shows their effectiveness on the big range of Britain society. This situation is accomplishable by communicative networks development in other EU-membered countries. Although, effective entrance of extreme right-wings to power for limitations of European governments structural limitations against crisis can weaken their situation, fascism experience intensifies this concern that the mutual European values and ideas will face with what consequences after the empowerment of extreme right-wing parties?

References

- Acharya, Viral & Others (2009). The Financial Crisis of 2007-2009: Causes and Remedies. *Financial Markets, Institutions & Instruments*, Volume 18, Issue 2, March.
- Banulescu-Bogdan, Natalia & Fratzke, Susan (2015). *Europe's Migration Crisis in Context: Why Now and What Next?* Sited in: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/europe-migration-crisis-context-why-now-and-what-next>.
- Bottomor, Tom (2002). *The Frankfurt School and Its Critics*. London: Routledge.
- Briggs, Asa (1961). The Welfare State in Historical Perspective. *European Journal of Sociology*, Volume 2, Issue 2.
- Cohrs, Patrick O. (2006). *The Unfinished Peace after World War I: America, Britain and the Stabilisation of Europe, 1919-1932*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dalakoglou, Dimitris (2016). Europe's last frontier: The spatialities of the refugee crisis. *City*, 20:2, pp. 180-185, DOI: 10.1080/13604813.2016.1170467.
- Dumenil, Gerard & Levy, Dominique (2001). *The Crisis of Neoliberalism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Funke, Manuel; Schularick, Moritz & Trebesch, Christoph (2015). *Politics in the Slump: Polarization and Extremism after Financial Crises, 1870-2014*. Sited in: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/events/2015/20151001_post_crisis_slump/documents/c._trebesch.pdf
- Gartner, Bruno (2010). *The Financial and Economic Crisis and Developing Countries*. Translated by Jacqueline Gartmann, sited in: <https://poldev.revues.org/144>.
- Hedges, Chris (2007). *American Fascists: the Christian Right and the war on America*. New York: Adivision of Schuster.
- Horkheimer, Max (1973). The Authoritarian State. *Telos*, Vol. 1973, No. 15, Spring.
- Ivan Jobs, Richard (2009). Youth Movements: Travel, Protest, and Europe in 1968. *Am Hist Rev*, 114(2), April.
- Jay, Martin (1996). *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950*. California: University of California Press.
- Kenen, P.B (1989). *The International Economy*. Prentice – Hall.
- Maniferd, A.Z. (1974). *A Short History of the World*. Moscow: Progress Publisher.
- McInnes, N. (1972). *The Western Marxists*. New York: Library Press.
- Skóra, Maria (2016). *Answers to the refugee crisis: Right-wing populism on the rise in Central-Eastern Europe*. 14. Januar. cited in: <http://www.progressives-zentrum.org/answers-to-the-refugee-crisis-right-wing-populism-on-the-rise-in-central-eastern-europe/>.
- Stackelbeg, Rodrick (1999). *Hitler & Germany*. London: Routledge.
- Veebel, Viljar & Markus, Raul (2015). Europe's Refugee Crisis in 2015 and Security Threats from the Baltic Perspective. *Journal of Politics and Law*; Vol. 8, No. 4.
- Williams, Walter (2003). *Reaganism and the Death of Representative Democracy*. Washington, D.C: Georgeton University Press.



THE 12TH EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

**The Icelandic and Romanian Profile.
Different Patterns in a Converging World**

Ionel Sergiu Pirju¹

Abstract. The majority of intercultural studies are preferring a sample with two cultures, even such a study can't provide a complex understanding about the importance of culture in the international context. The most complex Cross Cultural studies (Schwartz, GLOBE, Hofstede, and Trompenaars) include a large number of cultures, but time and costs remain major obstacles for an exhaustive analyses. The aim of this article is to present relevant intercultural values that characterize Iceland and Romania: history, language, power distance and conflict management. This study it is a synchronic one because in its content will be analyzed the contemporary situations in the two countries. The analysis is exploratory and it will be used the Locke's consensual inductive system which involves mostly the collections of scholars' opinions but with personal reflections.

Keywords: Iceland; Romania; cultural values; performance; power distance

1. Introduction

Along the history, the cross cultural adaptation offers solutions for individuals to become skilled by identifying critical situation in order to avoid severe consequences for their particular situations. Based on former scholar experience, the assumption of this research is that in the international field, if cross-cultural knowledge is mastered, there is an additional opportunity to develop and maintain an excellent relationship with international partners. At the same time, according to the principle of concordance, in case of identifying common values between two countries, it seems natural that there should be a greater intensity of common projects, compared to that achieved with other regions.

This article will try to present first the main strategy of Icelandic and Romanian policy regarding the European integration. Also, by comparing the cultural values between the two countries, the study will emphasize how much the Romanian society will try to increase the level of stability and establish credibility on the international arena. To integrate the article into the extension demanded by the cross cultural methodology, it will be also analyzed the differences between Power distance and Performance orientation. Both values are presenting the perfect benchmarking model for practical implications in order to benefit the societal culture from the two countries. The approach I propose tries to capture the influence of these two cultural dimensions on the international performance of a state by comparing the values and norms between the two countries. It aims at emphasizing the importance of multiculturalism (Bercovitch & Foulkes, 2012) and is focused on the importance of cultural synergy in interstate relations.

¹ Senior Lecturer, PhD, Danubius University of Galati, Faculty of Communications and International Relations, Romania, Address: 3 Galati Blvd., Galati 800654, Romania, Tel.: +40372361102, Corresponding author: pirjusergiu@univ-danubius.ro.

This article does not claim an exhaustive analysis; it will reflect some aspects of the contemporary cultural values between Iceland and Romania because the most important aspects of the world situation can be passed through cultural lenses. The in depth comparison could be seen as a diagnosis method “whose main content is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the analysed domain, highlighting them and finalizing into corrective recommendations”. (Nicolescu & Verboncu, 2008, p. 135)

In order to achieve the proposed objective, the subject of the study is structured in two parts where it will be presented the intercultural paradigms required for this cross cultural study. In each part the intention is to demonstrate the need for understanding of the cultural values between the two countries, because on the global market the cross cultural knowledge is underlying the innovative skills for international cooperation.

2 Historical Background and the Policy Regarding the European Integration

The main integrators factors from a cultural point of view are: language, religion, ethnicity, social and political values, (Fox, 2002) but the history is the pillar of them. History is highlighting the following feature of national cultures in intercultural research: the country’s specificity is identical with the specificity of the dominant national culture. National history identifies with of the values promoted by a group of people transformed it into a national state. It is also favored by a number of factors that must be considered together: geography, religion and so on, each of them acting as a binder for that group of people.

The mismatch between national culture and the intercultural communication inevitably lead to the reduction in the efficiency. The first literary mentions about the history of Iceland were in *Islendigabok* (the Book of Icelanders) written only after 200 years after the arrival of the first settlers (Karlsson, 2013). The first parliament in the World, the *Althingi*, who now is second time active starting with 1944, was the perfect manifestation of the Old Commonwealth.

The modern political background of Iceland and the national culture were formed during the 1800s as an important part in creating independent Icelandic political platforms (Duelung, 2003). For many Icelanders there is a feeling that their old society was one of the best possible in those times. In history, the dynamics of adaptation of Icelanders to new situations involves a flexibility of their ego for achieving competitiveness in the international market. Iceland was and still it is now a pure cultural space (as in the beginning of the last century was also the German or Japanese) and in present days its history is characterized by a conjunction which is in harmony with the global system. The Discovery of America started from here.

In Romania the national history is characterized by the struggle of a homogeneous human group which from 2000 years, living only in the same determined space, tried not to be integrated in other former neighboring empires. The Romanians are very proud of their history (especially the victorious fights against the Ottoman Empire) but very unhappy with the present. The history in Romania has a self-centered character and its values should not be judged based on some ethnocentric criteria, instead they should be valued by their contribution to the European heritage. The present national history is seen now like a political problem because the 45 years of Communism were an imposed situation for the people.

The Romanian and Icelandic histories are integrated in the mainstream of European values (even on opposite geographical poles) and represent ones of the most important cultural pillars of the continent. In both countries the stories “help us understand how others negotiated the cultural attitudes of the past that have relevance for the present” (Martin & Nakayama, 2014, p. 77).

After the World War II the price of fish rose and this situation was very stimulating for the Icelandic Economy. For Romania it was the beginning of a new political era, the forced introduction of Communism. In the rising of New Europe, after the 1945, the two countries had an insignificant role, Romania because it was a satellite state of Moscow and Iceland because the new formed European Coal and Steel Industry had few implications on its direct export strategy. For that period Iceland had an unusually high volume of trade with the countries of Eastern Europe: 33% of its exports went to Eastern Bloc Countries (Thorhallson & Vignisson 2004, p. 24).

At January the 1st 1959: Great Britain, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Austria, Switzerland and Portugal formed European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Due to the fishery dispute with Britain (the Code Wars) Iceland was not invited to join the treaty. The agreement with the European Community was signed in 1972 when was ended the dispute between the Iceland and European Community regarding the fishing boundaries (Iceland extended the maritime line to 200 km).

The interest of Iceland for the European Community (EC) was from the beginning a practical one. In 1986 Spain and Portugal, the most important buyers of the Icelandic Fish, joined to the European Community and if until 1885 Iceland exported to the EC 23% of its salt fish after that date the amount of exports raised over 95%. After the historical discourse of Jacques Delors from the European Parliament in 1986 regarding the necessity of strengthening the collaboration between the EFTA and EC, the Icelandic Political Parties started to become interested on European Integration.

For Iceland the acceptance of European Economic Agreement (EEA) does not require the acceptance of EU's common agricultural and fishery policies. Also, the full membership to the European Union it was never a strong option for the country (both for political elite or common citizens). The only interest it was on strengthening the collaboration with European Economical Agreement which provides access to European Market with limited tariffs.

The Icelandic euro skepticism is based on the population strong beliefs on self-determination and on the intention that in the future the nation should be able to decide on its inner policies in the fishing strategy. "There was a clear consensus that the Icelandic Nation was unique and had to be protected when it came to international cooperation". (Bergmann, 2012)

Like all the other countries of the former communist bloc, Romania has made efforts to substitute the totalitarian system with democracy and free market policies, which has impacted upon political structure and social behaviours (legislation is under construction and the political and business communities are getting more sophisticated). Until 1989 the Romanian state was a factor of restriction for political freedom. Today, after 25 years, new research initiatives are required about the role of Romania in South Eastern Europe (Bibu & Brancu, 2008).

In the same frame of time, between 1960-1970, Romania was the most Western oriented country from the Warsaw Pact. The South Eastern country was the first communist country with opened an Embassy in Western Germany (1967) and also the first communist state with established commercial relations with European Community by signing two agreements. The first one was signed in 1974 named General System of Preferences and the second in 1980 – Agreement of Industrial Products. (Angelescu, 2012)

The ex-communist president Nicolae Ceausescu (who was executed after a very quick simulation of trial on 25 December 1989) was characterized by "The Economist" as "de Gaulle of the Warsaw Pact". After the 1980 the Romanian dictator became paranoiac with an anti-western attitude and Romania started to be an autarchic society.

Romania was the only communist state which not invaded Czechoslovakia after the social riot from 1968 and a lot of western leaders came as political guests in the communist era - French President Charles de Gaulle, the US Presidents Nixon and Ford. Also, Romania was the first country for the communist bloc with join IMF and General Agreement for Tariffs and Trade – GATT (Constantiu, 2011).

Immediately, after the December Revolution from 1989, Romania was perceived like an East Oriented country, being the last ex-communist state which signed a diplomatic path to NATO - 12 October, 1990. Iceland was a founding state of the Alliance in 1949 and also signed a historical agreement with USA in 1951 which allowed the opening of a military base on Keflavik peninsula, closed in 2006. It is important to mention that a part of the logistical and human resources from Keflavik base was moved to a new open NATO base in Romania. The new base located in the proximity of the Black Sea is now an important part of the European Defense Strategy regarding possible Russian or Middle East (Iran) aggressions.

Unlike Iceland, in Romania the idea of European integration was very popular among the population but not among the politicians with left orientation, who in the 1990 had expressed nostalgia about ex communism society. A survey made in 1995 demonstrated that 97% of the Romanians are in favor for EU membership – the highest score in Europe. (Angelescu, 2012)

In the next period Romania failed in achieving the progress in implementing the European “Aquis Communautaire” and in consequence (together with Bulgaria) was excluded from the first wave of European Enlargement. On January 2007 Romania was accepted as a new member in the European Family but with some restrictions regarding the Schengen space and monetary policy.

Both Iceland and Romania had to face the economic crises from 2007. In Iceland the phenomenon had a very strong impact on the civil society because 90% of the financial system collapsed and the currency lost half of its value. Mostly because of fishery industry the economy was able to recover but it is important to mention the assistance program provided by the IMF, Nordic States and Poland (Polish are the first minority in Iceland).

In Romania, the politicians` strategy was not centered on the welfare of common citizens; even the IMF recommended the taxation of large fortunes, the Government “in its wisdom” chose to reduce the common wages with 25%. It is important to notice that in Iceland the Parliament took measures in favor of the borrowers by creating the “Debtors Ombudsman” with enough power to reduce the value of the debts. If the credits in foreign currency are considered in Iceland a violation of the national law, in Romania there is not a similar mentality and a large number of common people are still having serious problems due to the exchange fluctuations.

As a positive aspect the economic growth was positive in the both countries and Romania is the leader of the European Union with an economic increment of 3,6 % in 2015. It is important to mention the non-conventional response of the Icelandic society regarding the “classical” way to make policy. In 2010 the Best Party promoted by the show-man Jon Gnarr obtained 35% of Reykjavik`s votes and the actor become the mayor of the Capital.

In Iceland and Romania we can find a constant struggle against acculturation and assimilation by powering neighbors. Acculturation refers to the changes that took place in a human community, caused by constant interaction with a dominant social group. (Schmidt et all, 2007, pp. 21-22) Assimilation of cultures implies also the existence of an asymmetry against the methods of distribution of power, or the degree to which a minor culture is active in the community in which it is integrated. (Vlăsceanu et all, 1998, p. 45) In both situations there was no assimilation and acculturation and the icons of the past are

still present in the daily life situations. The resistance to foreign oppression is the most important historical value in Iceland and Romania

3. The Cross Cultural Values of Iceland and Romania

The approach for this section tries to capture the influence of the cultural dimensions on the international performance of a state by comparing the values and norms between the two countries. It aims at emphasizing the importance of multiculturalism for public collaboration (Popa, 2015) and is focused on the importance of cultural synergy in interstate relations. Intercultural communication occurs in every day relations and power relations are very present in these encounters. "Communication across power divides can be very difficult, particularly when there is a cultural difference in how power is viewed or how power distance is expressed". (Martin & Nakayama, 2014, p. 316)

Without no doubt Iceland and Romania are cultural nations with very strong linguistic identities. By culture we understand a group of persons who speaks the same language and belonging to the same territory or social group. (Lun & Firkola, 2000, p. 142) The Icelandic language is the purest manifestation of the Viking spirit and Romanians are the only people from South Eastern Europe who are preserving their Latin language amidst the Slavic nations. The conservation of linguistic legacy is the most valued issue in these two countries regarding their past. Even so, where people are speaking the same language can be differences in communication style and language use. (Martin & Nakayama, 2014)

The jewellery of Icelandic language it have been transmitted across the World through the Saga. From the beginning the Icelandic literature was an open one to the World because "the poets and storytellers of Iceland followed events in the rest of Scandinavia with keen interest composing new works about contemporary matters" (Olason, 2006, p. 5).

In both languages the linguistic metaphors teach how should behave with paradoxes and the complexity of the international realities. The metaphors are used in daily life situations and using them makes us aware about the complexity of our way of thinking.

The practical importance of the metaphor with the acquisition of the ability of using it refers to the fact that Icelanders and Romanians are using it as a basis for explaining and discovering new perspectives. The metaphor requires a fine spirit of analysis, it focuses on the more subtle manifestation of national behaviour, and these are reported to the meanings given by the members of a country regardless of the place they occupy in the society. Working with metaphors, as integrative parts of intercultural diagnosis in Iceland and Romania implies "the ability to follow simultaneously both literal and symbolic communication the symbolic and metaphoric communication, forms a self-expression and a presentation of all the situations where the subject cannot be aware or able to express itself analytically" ((Grant & Oswick, 1996) cited by (Huțu, 2007, p. 124)).

The cultural metaphor offers a new way for understanding the life and behind each structure it is a universe of meanings which determines the human relations. The linguistic metaphor presents the important role of the system of beliefs, values, ideology etc. in the national reality in both countries. In Iceland as in Romania very important is the establishment and acceptance of a linguistic common code of behaviour etiquette (abstaining from religious and ethnic comments, establishing clear the individual responsibilities, the private delimitations) which can develop the solving of the fundamental dilemma of communication (Teodorascu & Arsith, 2014). In both countries there is a diachronic vision

of national language which it is the catalyst bridge to different time periods of the history – the living link with the ancestors.

For cultural values, the Geert Hofstede model presents the dynamics of the common values in a country. For the majority of the people their native values are a very important lens through which the World it is accepted or not. Hofstede identifies six cultural dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity, long term orientation and indulgence. Those represent independent preferences for the citizens of a state which differentiate them from the people belonging to other countries.

In the next figure there are presented the cross cultural values between Iceland and Romania.

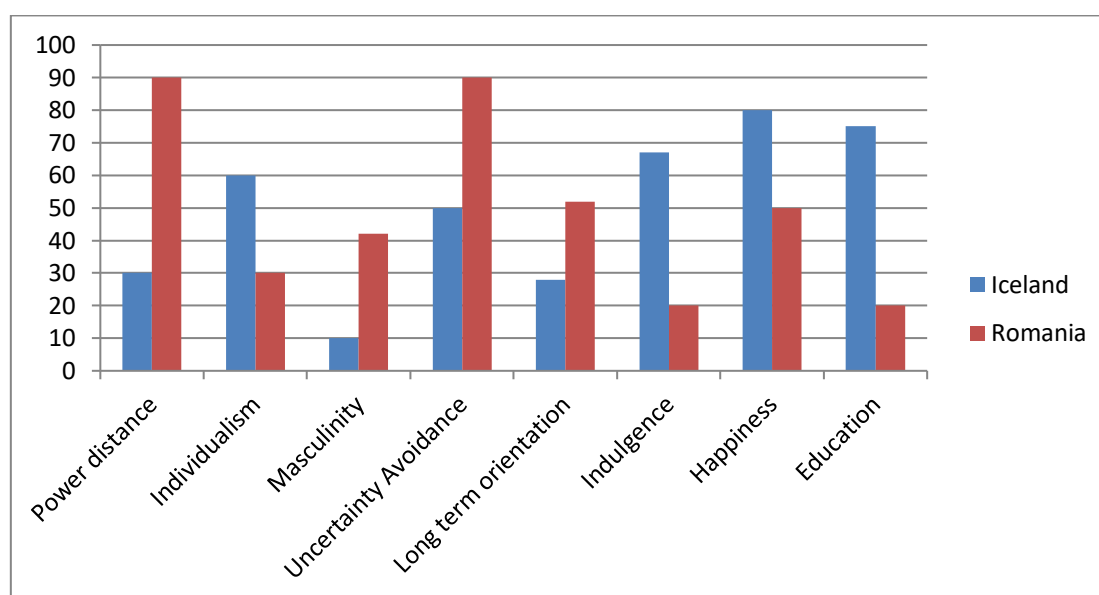


Figure 1. Cross cultural values of Icelandic and Romanian society. Adaptation of the author for Geert Hofstede values, <http://geert-hofstede.com/iceland.html>

Power Distance (PD) is the degree to which members of an organization and society encourage and reward unequal distribution of power with greater power at higher levels or expect power to be shared equally in that society (Chokkar et alii, 2008, p. 4).

Hofstede Center (2017) reported a PD score of 90 for Romania and 30 Iceland (ranking Romania as an unequal society where the people feel that they should not have aspirations beyond their rank). The Romanian score of this dimension is significantly higher than the World average, comparable with Guatemala (95), Panama (95), Philippines (94) and Russia (93). The essence of this dimension demonstrates a huge gap between the elites and the masses, a strong segmentation and an acute inequality in incomes. It is important to observe how it is possible in Romania to make the transition from “the status from ascription” to “the status by achievement” (Trompenaars, 1993). This means demonstrating how much, in present days, a person’s performances accounts for a high status rather than his allegiance to a political group, or sex (Sorcaru, 2016).

Icelandic culture could be presented like USA culture and be described as a: “very egalitarian society whose Constitution not only guarantees the existential equality of every man and woman, of whatever ethnic or national background, but in which people have come to expect that differences in status and power are minimized and hierarchical structures primarily express inequalities in roles established for convenience or efficiency’s sake”. (Chhokar et alii, 2008, p. 508)

Performance Orientations (PO) refers to the extent to which an organization or society encourages and rewards group members for performance improvement or excellence (Chhokar et al., p. 45). As a country of the former European communist block, Romania is characterized by a transitional economy which has to face the substantial changes in political structure, economy and cultural configuration. No discussion of leadership and performance in Iceland or in Romania can be fully understood without, even if ever so briefly, paying attention to the historical, political, economic and social context from which it emerged (Hofstede, 2002). In particular, Romania has been influenced in the last 90 years by successive waves of political ideologies (from Monarchy through Communism to Parliamentary Republic) which shaped a paradox society which oscillates between a non-combative mentality and European Union values.

Even if it is highly evaluated and encouraged in management, the performance is jeopardized in Romania due to the clientelist relations, but there exists a strong expectation of the society to emerge the country as a performance and future oriented nation. Therefore, it is very useful in Romania to present how much the competence counts in obtaining top levels on political or business hierarchy and not the social connections or any other such criteria. And because Icelandic culture is perceived all over the world as a future oriented society, which invests in rationality and pragmatism and guarantees a great egalitarianism among its citizens, its model is an realistic benchmark for improving the Romanian *status quo*.

The happiness index and the importance of education for the Icelandic people is strictly connected with the role of performance orientation in the community. The Icelandic Performance orientation it is related to the country's openness to change, its willingness to take risks and try new things, its pragmatic mentality and its desire to excel in order to achieve tangible results. The democratic ideas, support of others and sense of fair play may help in real life situations in Iceland. Icelandic management style can offer for a recent South-Eastern European democracy the models for the wealth of recognition to encourage competition and to accept the legitimacy of the victorious party in the competitions.

The conflict situations appear in everyday situations and "the way in which people respond to conflict may be influenced by their cultural background...most specifically, most people deal with conflict in the way they learned with growing up – their default style" (Martin & Nakayama, 2014, p. 235).

The intention of conflict management strategies is to generate performance using a free communication style. An increase with 1% of level of economic freedom will generate an increase of economic, political, and social effectiveness with 3,8%. Also an increase with 1% of the quality of rule of law will contribute with 7,5% at the effectiveness area (Pohoata et al., 2013, p. 31).

As a country from South Eastern Europe, Romania is characterized by a conflict management strategy which has to face the substantial changes in political structure, in economy and in cultural configuration.

The solving of conflicts is jeopardized in Romania due to the clientelist relations (if you are better political connected you have the chance to solve all the problems) but there are strong expectations from the people to emerge the country as a performance oriented nation.

The Icelandic conflict management strategy it is related to the country's openness to change, its willingness to take risks and try new things, its pragmatic mentality and its desire to excel in order to achieve tangible results. Conflict management situations can be solved through a "theta reddast/it will sort itself out" attitude because no matter how complex the situation is, in the end things will all work out and even the rules exist can be stretched and expanded as needed (Kristjansdottir et al., 2015).

In general, for a conflict management audit Vanderlinden et al. (2010) identify four key stages: observing, analyzing, evaluation and formulation recommendation. Also is recommended to place the

cultural values in the general context of the cooperation, taking into account the main objectives, but also the particularities of the external environment.

Drennan D. (1992) proposes, for example, the approach of the conflict as an internal approach, as a factor that shapes the internal culture, the main objectives of the managers, having the role to create a team spirit between the employees¹. Is important taking into consideration the objective pursued by the all (staff or employees) and the ways in which they can turn it into performance.

The strategy of conflict management should be based on dialogue, where those interested could be able to ask questions, because in such complex matters always can appear useful new directions. A competent person trained in the research field, is able through its interventions to correct any errors or deficiencies who escaped to those who have served the project, and conversation inevitably is helping to discover new truths.

The Icelandic tradition in conflict management and in political science (the oldest Parliament in the World) can provide for the Romanian elite the civic obligation to seek wealth not only for personal use, but equally to the well-being of the community – a high human orientation.

4. Conclusions

The dynamics of Globalization encourages the study of cross cultural differences between countries and their impact on effectiveness in the proximity. Making progress is quintessential for Icelandic and Romanian societies in the recent European context. The best way for selecting foreign partners involves a complex process in which each partner (with his unique cultural background) it is evaluated.

Icelandic society is a second chance culture and, according to Harold Bloom theory (1997), an *anxiety of influence* is necessary for the Romanian people, because after 45 years of communism and 25 years of hard transition, the Romanians needs to struggle in the global market since the entire South Eastern Europe is still embedded in the historical, political economic, social and cultural frame of the past.

In Romania there is also a need for Innovative Leadership (the Icelandic style) to be seen as a process of influence in which the individual leader exercises considerable impact on others by inducing them to think and behave in an effective way. The Leadership has to be seen as an expression of the democratic will and a process oriented to global collaboration through cultural sensibility and adaptability.

We can note that for the Icelandic culture the country right to self-determination is stronger in the economical agreements with the European Union. In the first part of the study it is noticed that for Iceland the first steps for a European Integration had a strong economical and national importance. In Iceland more than in Romania, it is possible to identify the importance of ethno political identity because the groups are “organized around their shared identity and seek gains for members of their groups” and the “material and political demands as claims arising from their cultural concerns” (Gurr, 1996, p. 53). The welfare of the nation and the security of the fishing boundaries are directly connected with the rejection of EU integration.

In Romania the group leaders have not a common identity with a political doctrine, the loyalty is strictly to the restricted clan (family, business associates etc.) and it is very common to change often the political party (There are Members in Parliament who in 3 mandates changed 3 or even more political Parties etc.). Even Romania is better linked with European Union (from the institutional point of view) this

¹ Cited by (Huțu, 2007, pp. 120-122).

country it is much more limited than Iceland in achieving performance, in part due to the huge phenomenon of corruption. In Romania, future-oriented behaviours, planning, investing in the future are not highly ranked. In Iceland, an expression of Performance orientation is represented by investments in education and personnel development (postgraduate education, competence development, etc.).

The approach which I proposed here, the comparison of several values between Iceland and Romania will help in the future to analyze the contemporary educational and business environment between the two nations. This study helps to understand the importance of the cultural mediator who could be able to provide suggestion which may have a strategic role in any research area.

Similar studies emphasize the conditions through which a project could be operative by involving the collaboration and concentration of all the interested parties. The synergic participation it is achieved only when people identifies themselves with a common project and take collective responsibilities. It is recommended to place the cultural values in the general context of the cooperation, taking into account the main objectives, but also the particularities of the external environment.

We can infer that understating the cultural values of each person is the key factor in the evolution of international collaboration. In conclusion, this limited research could be the basis for an extensive study focused on deeper understanding of the Icelandic political culture and can improve the Romanian cultural adaptability with cross-cultural effectiveness in the South East Europe.

5. References

- Angelescu, I. (2012). *European Integration studies in Romania from Analyzing European Union Policy*. Edited by Bundi Federig; Eliassen A. & Kyell, Bologna, Societa editrice il Mulino.
- Bercovitch, J. & Foulkes, J. (2012). Cross cultural effects in conflict management: Examining the nature and relationship between culture and international mediation. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, pp. 25-47.
- Bibu, N. & Brancu, L. (2008). *Convergences of the Romanian societal culture with European culture clusters in the process of European integration. The role of intercultural teams management in increasing European cohesion*. Munich Personal RePEc.
- Bergmann, E. (2012). How National Sentiments have influenced Iceland's European Policy. *PhD dissertation*, Reykjavik, Department of Political science, University of Iceland.
- Bloom, H. (1997). *The Anxiety of Influence. A Theory of Poetry*. New York, Oxford: University Press.
- Chhokar, J. & House, R. (2008). *Culture and Leadership across the World, the GLOBE Book of in – Depth Studies of 25 Societies*. London: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Constantiniu, F. (2011). *Honest history of the Romanian People/O istorie sincera a poporului roman*. Bucharest: Publisher Univers Enciclopedic Gold.
- Duelung, P. (2003). *The Nordic Cultural Model*. Copenhagen Nordic Cultural Institute.
- Fox, R.G. (2002). *Anthropology, by comparison*. London: Routledge.
- Gurr, T.R. (1996). *Minorities, Nationalists, and Ethnopolitical Conflict, Managing Global Chaos: Sources of and Responses to International Conflict*. Ed: Crocker, Hampson & Aall, Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Hutu, C.A. (2007). *Organizational culture and leadership/Cultură organizațională și leadership*. Bucharest: Publisher Economică.
- Hofstede, G. (2002). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviours, institutions and organizations across nations*. Thousand oaks, C.A.: Sage.
- Hofstede, Geert (2017). The Hofstede center. <http://geert-hofstede.com/iceland.html>.
- Karlsson, G. (2013). *A Brief History of Iceland*. Reykjavik, Printing: Isafoldarprentsmiðja.

International Relations in the Contemporary World. Geopolitics and Diplomacy

- Kristjansdottir, S.; Bjanadottir, T. & Saphiere, D.H. (2015). *Cultural detective. Iceland*, www. culturaldetective.com.
- Lun, L. & Firkola, P. (2000). Methodological issues in cross cultural management research: Problems, solutions and proposal. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, vol. 17, pp. 133 – 154.
- Martin, J.M. & Nakayama T.K. (2014). *Experiencing Intercultural Communication*. Mc Graw Hill Education.
- Nicolescu, O. & Verboncu. I. (2008). *Managerial Methodologies/ Metodologii Manageriale*. Bucharest: Publisher: Universitara.
- Olason, V. (2006). *Old Icelandic Poetry*. In a History of Icelandic Literature. Vol. 5 of Histories of Scandinavian Literature. Edited by: Daisy Neijmann.
- Popa, D.A. (2015). *Introduction in Public Relations/Introducere in Relatii Publice*. Galati: Editura Universitara Danubius.
- Pohoata, I.; Socoliuc, O.R. & Diaconasu, D.E. (2013). *Institutional Quality – Determinants of Transitional Performances in Eastern European Nations*. Review of Economics and Business Studies, Iasi.
- Schmidh, W.V. (2007). *Communicating Globally – Intercultural Communication and International Bussines*. London, Sage Publications.
- Şorcaru, S.L. (2016). *Sexism – Topical Issues – Case studies*. Personal article: The Female Leaders in a Society with Many Prejudices. Saarbrucken, Lambert.
- Teodorascu, F. & Arsith, M. (2014). *Communications and public relations in political organizations/Comunicare și relații publice în organizații politice*. Galați: Editura Zigotto.
- Thorhallson, B. & Vignisson, H.T. (2004). (A) *Iceland's policy on European Integration from the foundation of the republic to 1972*, from Icelandic and European Integration. Edited by Thorhallson, B., Publisher Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.
- Thorhallson, B. & Vignisson H.T. (2004). (B) *A controversial step membership of the EEA, from Icelandic and European Integration*. Edited by Thorhallson, B., Publisher Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.
- Trompenaars, F. (1993). *Riding the waves of culture: Understanding cultural diversity in business*. London: The Economist Books.
- Vanderlinden, B.; Frasila, C. & Dupriez, P. (2010). The multiple perspective in cross cultural audit/Perspectiva multiplă în auditul cultural. *Management Intercultural*, Anul XI, nr. 21. Iași: Publisher Alexandru Ioan Cuza.
- Vlasceanu, M. (1999). *Organizations and organizational culture/Organizațiile și cultura organizării*. Bucharest: Trei.



THE 12TH EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

**Modern Problems of Interaction of the Higher Education System and the
Labor Market in the Russian Federation**

Evgenia Karavaeva¹, Sergey Zapryagaev²

Abstract: The EU initiative to create a unified European system of higher education (as a response to the dominance of US universities in the field of education and to the need of integration the dissimilar systems of individual European countries education) has initiated a significant process of rethinking the notions of higher education in both individual countries and globally. The Russian education system was involved into the European process of reform and modernization by the own initiative, trying to find answers to the new challenges posed by the market economy and by the new socioeconomic structure of Russia. However, even after 20 years of continuous transformation, the current higher education system of the Russian Federation still remains before a real list of unresolved problems and challenges.

Keywords: Higher Education System; Labor Market; Russian Federation

1. Introduction

The EU initiative to create a unified European system of higher education (as a response to the dominance of US universities in the field of education and to the need of integration the dissimilar systems of individual European countries education) has initiated a significant process of rethinking the notions of higher education in both individual countries and globally. The Russian education system was involved into the European process of reform and modernization by the own initiative, trying to find answers to the new challenges posed by the market economy and by the new socioeconomic structure of Russia. However, even after 20 years of continuous transformation, the current higher education system of the Russian Federation still remains before a real list of unresolved problems and challenges.

Outside of the customary planned economy, the traditional higher education institutions have given rise to considering themselves as the not modern structures that ostensibly lag behind the demands of the labor market. At the same time, the European and world criteria for universities became as the main criteria for the definition of a “modern university” in RF. The quality of education and the relevance of graduates to the labor market have become among the main criteria for assessing the activities of Russian universities. As a result, a noticeable difference manifested between the existing content of the Russian Federation higher education, based on academic standards and actual requirements of employers to graduates. (Pilipenko, Zhidkov, Karavaeva & Serova, 2016, pp. 5-15) This difference was most noticeable in the group of classical universities that created during the Soviet period. They found

¹ PhD, ACUR, Moscow State University, Russia, Address: Vorobiovy gory, MSU, main building, A-1006, Moscow, Russia, 119991, Tel.: +7 495 939 25 05, Corresponding author: karavaeva@rector.msu.ru.

² Professor, PhD, Voronezh State University, Russia, Address: University pl.1, Voronezh, Russia, 394006, Tel.: +79036529105, E-mail: zsa@main.vsu.ru.

themselves in the most difficult situation in market economy, so as they traditionally focused in education on the development of fundamental researches.

In accordance with international experience, the harmonization of the education system and the labor market is realized as a result of creation the National Qualification System (NQS). The process of NQS formation in Russia as a regulator of the Russian labor market began in the last decade and has entered now its active phase. The developing NQS in Russia includes:

The list of professional activities types in the 34 professional activity sectors (like these: Education, Health care, Culture and art, Agriculture, Power engineering and so on);

Professional standards (developed for a specific type of professional activity). As of March 2017, 1001 professional standards approved¹. Their number will increase to 1130 in the near future.

The documents of NQS are developing by: the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Russian Federation; by President's National Council for Professional Qualifications²; and by Councils for professional qualifications, created in certain sectors of professional activity.

At the same time, the current legislation of the Russian Federation requires that the system of professional education (including higher education -HE) be brought into the line with the requirements of professional standards, guiding that this will ensure the quality and relevance of graduates. The Federal State Educational Standards (FSES) are the instruments to support quality assurance in the RF higher education system. FSES regulate the basic parameters of educational content, the requirements for the competence and qualification of graduates, the conditions for the implementation of the education process, etc. In total, there are about 500 FSES in RF higher education. The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for design the educational standards, which relies on its own developments and on recommendations of Federal Educational and Methodological Associations created in the academic environment.

To implement the harmonization of the requirements of professional standards with the FSES, the Ministry of Education and Science sets the task of updating ("actualization") of all FSES of HE without exception, by July 1, 2017, ensuring their interfacing with professional standards. However, this task in itself proved to be extremely complex and lacking linear and unambiguous solutions. The announced "actualization" is the next (already the fourth) stage of significant modernization of state educational standards since 2001.

The each stage of modernization and introduction of a new standards was accompanied by extensive technical, bureaucratic and increasing reporting work within educational organizations. The paradox of the current stage of modernization is also that the professional standards themselves did not have time to pass sufficient approbation and don't have convincing evidence of their positive impact on the Russian labor market. Moreover they are full of contradictions, inaccuracies and mistakes. As a result, a wide range of problems in the education system is complemented by another major organizational challenge and is a source that causes instability and tension in the academic environment.

This report shows some features of Russia NQS formation (in comparison with similar processes in the countries of the European Union and the USA) and outlines the risks of an immediate restructuring of the higher education system to introduced professional standards requirements.

¹ Professional Standards Register. <http://profstandart.rosmintrud.ru>.

² The official site of the National Council for professional qualifications at President of the Russian Federation <http://nspkrf.ru>.

2. Features and problems of NQS formation in the Russian Federation:

1. The NQS of Russia does not have an approved National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

The National Qualifications Framework is a tool for linking the world of labor and education. NQF is a general description of the qualification levels recognized at the federal level and establishing the correspondence of professional qualifications and educational qualifications. NQF is the main way to achieve qualifications in the territory of the state, which approves NQF and puts it into operation.

The experience of the countries that developed the NQS shows that when it is created, the NQF is developed and approved first. The NQF serves as a kind of interface between professional qualifications and qualifications in education. In addition, the NQF is a tool for comparing and recognizing national professional and educational qualifications with qualifications operating on the world labor market and in the world market of educational services. For example, European countries form the NQF on the basis of the European Qualifications Framework, approved in 2008 by the European Commission.

2. The process of NQS establishing in Russia began with the development and approval of a large number of professional standards. They regulate individual types of professional activity that are often randomly and with varying degrees of generalization. But the full innovative economic model for development of the Russian labor market wasn't built. In fact, hundreds developed professional standards were "attracted" to the areas of professional activity (and not vice versa). This approach led to direct contradictions in the formalization of activities in the modern labor market and some important sectors of professional activity in the National Qualifications System were "lost". So, for example, the sector "Science", which is one of the most important spheres of activity not only in academic and industry institutes, but also in the field of higher education, has not come to the list of professional activity sectors. As a result, the area of direct employment can't be determined it for university graduates in the classical research areas of training (as so Mathematics, Physics, Philosophy, History, etc.). That leads to the artificially created dangerous picture of "non-demand" of such graduates by the modern labor market.

Another example of real challenge to the higher education system (in the current time) is the new professional activity sector – "Administrative Management and Office Activities". This type of activity was previously considered an auxiliary activity and wasn't distinguished as a separate sector. As a result, for 90% of the current FSES (in which the organizational and managerial type of activity is indicated), the requirement of "actualization" leads to uncertainty - use this new professional standard sector only or use profile sector standard, which also has organizational and managerial functions.

In general, it should be noted that only 30% of all professional standards approved to date require the highest level qualifications (that is, 7, 8, and 9). The remaining 70% of standards require only a bachelor level and below!

The cited examples display the existence of "system-wide" problems that inevitably arise in the "actualization" FSES in HE, the overcoming of which requires analysis and time.

3. The list of activity areas specified in the Register of Professional Standards of the Russian Federation, approved by the order of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, does not correspond to the areas of activity identified by International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08). The existing distinction creates problems in the harmonization of the Russia professional qualifications system with the international system of qualifications. For the higher education system it may be reflected in the problem with the recruitment of foreign students. The existing distinction does not adequately reflect the qualifications for interested foreign partners.

4. Formally, the NQS of Russia does not include vocational education and vocational training, so they have a passive role, which does not correspond to world trends. At the heart of Russian professional standards are not the competence of employees that presuppose the possibilities of development and their career growth, but labor actions, knowledge and skills that fix the situation of work for today (and sometimes for yesterday).

5. In the NQS of Russia there is no transparent and technological tool for certification of qualifications and for the implementation of the model of lifelong learning education. In the European Union, such a tool is the European system of accumulation and transfer of academic credits (ECTS), which is a kind of “framework” for the entire system of competencies certification and learning outcomes received by the employee in the process of formal (basic and additional) and informal education. (Lokhoff, Wegewijs & Durkin et.all, 2010)

6. A negative feature of the procedure for developing professional standards in the RF is the lack of a unified model of requirements for personal and professional competencies of employees as the basis for the development of all professional standards. As a result, the developed and approved professional standards are so different from each other in the used approaches. So the “actualization” of educational standards on the base of professional standards in this conditions don’t allow to organize the integrity and interrelation of requirements.

Therefore, the “actualization” of the FSES of HE needs to analyze more than 80,000 labor functions (and about 30,000 labor actions, necessary knowledge and skills) registered in more than 1000 professional standards. This problem is a real challenge for the RF higher education system.

An example of a consistently built system of qualifications and competencies of employees is the National Competency Model USA (<http://www.onetonline.org/>). In 2008, the Department of Employment and Training of the US Department of Labor developed and published a basic model of requirements for employees of the US labor market at various levels in the form of the Employee Competencies Pyramid. The Department recommended this Pyramid to all research-intensive areas of activity and priority industries to develop industry-specific requirements for the qualifications and competencies of its employees.

As a result, the educational modules are formed on the bases of industry competence pyramid (sectoral requirements for the qualifications and competencies of employees), which are open electronic resources. These resources allow universities to build flexible modular educational programs that are tailored to the needs of a particular labor market sector, and employees plan their career paths through lifelong learning.

7. The modern system of structuring the higher education area, that has been formed in the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, contains nine enlarged educational groups: Mathematical and natural sciences (includes 46 FSES); Engineering, technology and engineering (216 FSES); Health and medical sciences (10 FSES); Agriculture and agricultural sciences (24 FSES); Social science (64 FSES); Education and pedagogical sciences (10 FSES); Humanities (29 FSES), Arts and culture (71 FSES); Defense and state security (19 FSES). Total 489 FSES. In turn, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection has identified 34 areas of professional activity, in which more than 1,000 professional standards have already been formed. The inconsistency of these two classification processes leads to depressing misunderstandings, which are painfully reflected in the higher education system of the Russian Federation. For example, it can already be stated that the absolute majority of Councils for professional qualifications don’t see their interests in research-intensive (fundamental)

areas of training at all (for example, the physicist-researcher turned out to be “unnecessary” neither nuclear, nor atomic, nor the space industry, nor the nanoindustry).

8. A highly specialized classification of professional and educational standards can significantly impede the training of specialists in interdisciplinary fields of activity. For example, the development of the Russian pharmaceutical industry innovative model needs specialists from such different educational fields (each from different enlarged educational groups) as biophysics, informatics, biochemistry, pharmacology, clinical medicine, fundamental medicine, chemical technology, farm economy, farm law, etc. It is not clear now how professional and educational standards can take into account all the required diversity of interdisciplinary educational trajectories.

3. Conclusion

The transformation of the labor market language into the degree program language (FSES) and vice versa is a very difficult task, requiring a systematic and balanced approach. Hasty “actualization” of FSES (Federal State Educational Standards) in HE does not correspond to the established international practice and common sense. It is necessary first to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the current and foreseeable labor markets and to compile a complete list of the required areas, types and tasks of professional activity. In addition, it is necessary to carry out a comprehensive work to establish the justified correspondence of the professional activity areas and education areas, types of professional activity and competencies of educational programs graduates.

The education system should not be faced with the task of directly transferring provisions of professional standards to FSES, as the number of professional standards is increasing and their content is updated consistently to reflect the current needs of the labor market. While the FSESs should be formulated in such a way as to ensure the technological and knowledge-based development of the Russian economy, and also meet the needs of society and the individual.

In educational standards, it is impossible even in formally form to record all the results of education, a list of disciplines and modules due to the constant change in science, technology, and approval of new professional standards. For this reason, the process of establishing the NQS is continuous and requires constant in-depth discussion by stakeholders: labor market- education system-society. It should be noted that practice shows that the necessary qualification of an employee can be achieved in various ways, including those not associated with professional education.

4. References

Lokhoff, J.; Wegewijs, B. & Durkin, K. et.all (2010). *A Tuning Guide to Formulating Degree Programme Profiles*. Bilbao, Groningen and Hugae.

Pilipenko, S.A.; Zhidkov, A.A.; Karavaeva, E.V. & Serova, A.V. (2016). Conjugation of FSES and professional standards: identified problems, possible approaches, recommendations for actualization. *Higher Education in Russia*, No. 6, pp. 5-15.

Professional Standards Register. <http://profstandart.rosmintrud.ru>.

The official site of the National Council for professional qualifications at President of the Russian Federation <http://nspkrf.ru>.



THE 12TH EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
**EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES**

**The Role and Impact of Migration and Euroscepticism in Promoting
“Multi-Speed” Europe**

Alin Avramescu Stefanita¹

Abstract: The year 2017 was designed at the level of European public opinion as the crucial moment for the evolution of the European Union. Scenarios and speculation have sprouted European media channels, creating a state of tension within the Member States. Today, the European Union resembles with the “European Concert” after the 1815 peace in Vienna, which was based on the balance of power, than with the Europe of the founding fathers, based on the harmonization of interests and the joy of working together for the common good European. To open the debate about EU’s future, the European Commission turned to the scenario method. This is not the first time this is the case. In other cases, the scenarios referred to a specific type of common European policy. Looking at the figures for confidence in their own governments and in the European Union in the autumn 2016 Eurobarometer, it was clear that in the Member States, officials in leadership positions had to guide their decisions according to citizens’ attitudes if they wanted to remain in power or to win elections. At the same time, mistrust had to be transformed into trust by decisions taken to satisfy citizens. The political context in which the Member States are located must not be overlooked. In the last year, elections took place in Austria, the Netherlands, France and will take place in Germany. Therefore, the influence of the electoral factor cannot be neglected as part of building decisions on the position adopted by a state within the European Union.

Keywords: Migration; Euroscepticism; European Union

Over time, Euroscepticism was thought to be just a British trend, a British dissatisfaction with European construction. Over the years, Euroscepticism has become a true political phenomenon at European level, one embraced more and more by Member States. Since the 1990s, Euroscepticism has passed the English Channel and has grown on the continent, in the countries behind the European construction.

France, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Austria, but also in many other member states of the European Union have appeared parties that, in the idea of promoting national sovereignty, national interests to the detriment of the common European ones, have developed the eurosceptic spirit towards the European construction. The National Front in France, the 5-Star Movement in Italy, the Geert Wilders Liberation Party in the Netherlands, and other nationalist formations in the European political spectrum have promoted a Eurosceptic speech in the last few years, one in which they claim that the European Union is a failed project, whose future is uncertain, even talking about a necessity for the Union to collapse.

For many years this speech has been contradicted by pro-Europeans, by political leaders in Brussels who ignored or even defied the warnings of the Eurosceptics. Politicians who made a grim vision of the future of the European Union have always been treated as enemies of European construction. More and more frequent victories of Eurosceptic politicians should have raised questions.

The idea of Euroscepticism is not a recent one, and it emerged in the 1980s to describe the British mistrust in the European integration project. The term has become generalized over time to define all

¹ PhD in progress, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest, Romania, Address: Expoziției 2 Blvd., 012103 Bucharest, Romania, Corresponding author: savrames@gmail.com.

those who are against the enlargement of the European Union. The development of the term Euroscepticism has seen three major stages. (Vasilopoulou, 2013, pp. 153-168)

First, a structural change in Euroscepticism has emerged since the 1990s with the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. (Eichenberg & Dalton, 2007) The significant increase in the European Union's competences, together with a broader consultation of citizens through the referendum, led to the end of what is called the "permissive consensus"¹ of views on European integration, meaning the end of the tacit consent of citizens regarding the European integration in the early 1950s, which underpinned the legitimacy of the "functionalist" approach of the Union.

Second, the negative response that France and the Netherlands gave the Constitutional Treaty in 2005, followed by the Irish negative response to the Treaty of Lisbon in 2008, posed challenges for the permissive consensus foundation. From this point, Hooghe and Marks have developed the theory of "constraining the disagreement," marked by an increase in the nature of dividing European questions and their use by political actors. (Hogge & Marks, 2008) This theory refers to the emergence of a political division on European issues and a politicization of public opinion on European affairs. (Belot, Cautrès, & Strudel, 2013)

Thirdly, the crises affecting the European Union have led to a decline in citizens' support and confidence in the Union and its institutions². Only a third of Europeans say they trust the community institutions, that is, the lowest level ever achieved. Most citizens believe that their voice is not heard in the European institutions. However, there is a link between trust and support for the political system that forms the basis of the legitimacy of the system in question³.

In several European countries, a recent wave has emerged regarding support for conservative populist parties, and Eurosceptic parties. Discontent with EU regulations, the large number of migrants coming from war-torn countries such as Syria, Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan to the European continent have created a whole new problem for the nations of Europe. This has overwhelmed many of the citizens of these countries to the point where they fear that there is a cultural threat to the traditions and way of life.

The reflection on the future of Europe stems from the very founding moment: the 1957 Treaty of Rome represented the victory of the federalists, or rather the functionalists, gathered around the France-Germany duo, against the intergovernmentalists gathered around the Great Britain. (Burgess, 2000) After 1957, the periods of political upheaval of the EU's political integration alternated with periods of rebound or stagnation of integration, generally synchronous with global developments.

Since the 1980s, the neoliberal ideology (the combination of liberalization / expansion of deregulated markets with the reversal of the evolving process of social emancipation) has influenced the options within the EU. The first germs of neoliberalism were introduced, paradoxically, even in the Single European Act, apparently prominently pro-integration. The moments of further integration, the most

¹ The expression "permissive consensus" was invented by V. O. Jr. Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy*. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1961 and was taken up again for the first time regarding European integration by Lindberg and Steingold in assessment of the support of public opinion to European integration in L. N. Lindberg and S. A. Scheingold, *Europe's Would Be Polity. Patterns of Change in the European Community*, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1970

² B. Cautrès, "Un effondrement de la confiance dans l'UE? Les attitudes des Européens vis-à-vis de l'Europe au cours de la Grande Récession", in (Blot, Rozenberg, Saraceno, & Strehö, 2014)

³ On this point see for example, C. Belot, "Support (by the citizens of the EU) is the cornerstone to this citizenship since it represents an initial form of recognition of the legitimacy of the European political system", "Les logiques sociologiques de soutien au processus d'intégration européenne: éléments d'interprétation", *Revue internationale de politique comparée*, 9 (1), 2002, p. 12.

relevant being the founding of economic and monetary union under the Maastricht Treaty, have been increasingly influenced by neoliberal ideology.

Monnet's dream regarding the European integration as a result of a process of harmonizing the interests of the nations has ceased gradually and integration, as it has been, has been achieved through a tough negotiation of the balance of interests between states¹.

Today, the European Union resembles with the "European Concert" after the 1815 peace in Vienna, which was based on the balance of power, than with the Europe of the founding fathers, based on the harmonization of interests and the joy of working together for the common good European. (Koskeniemi & Str ath, 2014, pp. 16 - 83) These developments have changed the original DNA of the EU, in which solidarity / cohesion form the founding nucleus.

To open the debate, the European Commission turned to the scenario method. This is not the first time this is the case. In other cases, the scenarios referred to a specific type of common European policy. In the case of reflection on the future of Europe, the scenario method involves a risk, especially when presenting scenarios that propose a reversal of integration, as treaties stipulate the continuous integration as an objective. The European Commission, however, has the mitigating circumstance that the proposed scenarios have already circulated in the market for ideas.

The events that took place in the European Union during 2016, the most important for European construction being Brexit, have generated discussions on the future of the Union. This is not the first time that such a discussion is taking place, but this time the European Union is facing something new, not talking about enlargement, but about the European Union after the loss of a Member State. Brexit and political developments at European level, including the rise of populism and Euroscepticism, have prompted European officials to discuss the need for institutional reform and, on a different level, to reform the entire European structure.

The year 2017 was designed at the level of European public opinion as the crucial moment for the evolution of the European Union. Scenarios and speculation have sprouted European media channels, creating a state of tension within the Member States. In the months leading up to the Rome Summit, international publications spoke about the future of the European Union under the spectrum of „multi-speed”.

Deutsche Welle publishes on March 24 "What does the European Union mean with having more speeds for Central and Eastern Europe?"². David Martin of Deutsche Welle said that "Central and Eastern European states are worried that a so-called "multi-speed Europe" will relegate them in the second tier of the European bloc. However, a more flexible Europe can only be the momentum they have always needed.

Also in March, Wolfgang Munchau of the Financial Times writes the article "A multi-speed formula will shape Europe's future."³ It showed that "the best option is that of a structure with an integrated core and a looser outer layer ". A month earlier, in February, Tony Barber wrote in the Financial Times on "Moving to a Europe with more speeds."⁴ Barber states that "the idea threatens to lead to split, but the

¹ European Documentation, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, "Jean Monnet, a grand design for Europe", RF Germania, 1988, p. 25 - 29

² DW: What does a multi-speed EU mean for central and eastern Europe?, <http://www.dw.com/en/what-does-a-multi-speed-eu-mean-for-central-and-eastern-europe/a-38016484>

³ Financial Times: A multi-speed formula will shape Europe's future, <https://www.ft.com/content/f01f1266-058e-11e7-ace0-1ce02ef0def9>

⁴ Financial Times: Moving to a multi-speed Europe, <https://www.ft.com/content/01573ae6-f378-11e6-95ee-f14e55513608>

desire to renew the impetus towards integration is sincere.” “Some Western European politicians dream about exploiting the concept of detaching a core of Europe from the conservative nationalists in Hungary and Poland, and from the political and corrupt circles in Bulgaria and Romania.” Barber concludes that “the goal is clear. The difficult part, as always with the EU, is how to achieve it. “

“Europe’s future is multi-speed and multi-tier,”¹ The Economist said in March. In a special report on the future of the European Union, The Economist wonders whether “Europe is ready to embrace a new model built not around similar values, but around those who differentiate them?” Thus, it is stated that “although the recent committee whitepaper and some national leaders have positioned themselves for a multi-speed Europe, they are considering a way for small groups of states to move forward in areas such as defense or taxation, without the need to wait for the others, using the instruments of the treaty that allow for improved cooperation. A true Europe with multi-speeds and more levels would be much more ambitious. “

The main scenarios that have emerged in the European public space have sparked emotions and controversy. Two of these have entered a wide debate and have been seen as the solutions that European leaders will find to resolve the crisis: Europe of “concentric circles” and Europe “with multi-speeds”.

The two scenarios are not new and they were also reiterated in the past by important politicians in the European Union, from the states that formed the basis of the European community. On the one hand, we have the vision of a Europe of “concentric circles” on the part of Christian Democrats in Germany, publicly exposed in 1994, when the German state held the rotating presidency of the European Union. On the other hand, we have a vision of a “multi-speeds” European Union, as presented by former French President Jacques Chirac in June 2000 in a speech before the German Reichstag and the former Foreign Minister of Germany Joschka Fischer. Chirac spoke of a partnership between France and Germany that would allow the two states to move forward on a more political and economic level, while Fischer, in his speech at the Humboldt University in 2000, spoke of a vision of a Europe with two speeds, which should have been led by Germany and France, alongside a limited group of Member States.

What Do The Two Political Visions Mean?

1) “*Europe of the Thick Core*” in the perception of Wolfgang Schauble. Between 1989 and 1991, Schauble was Minister of the Interior in Germany, playing an important role in the negotiations for reunification of the German state. His German ministerial period overlapped with the negotiations for the Maastricht Treaty, which established the Eurozone Foundation.

At the time, a general opinion at the level of the German people was that if Germany agreed to renounce the mark and participate in a European monetary union it was a kind of quid pro quo for the British and the French for their support for the reunification of Germany - An event with monumental implications for Europe's history as we know it today. (Eichengreen, p. 166)

Given the uncertainty about a possible monetary union, the German state was reluctant to renounce its own currency at that time, the mark being a success for the German economy in order to enter into an agreement with partners that were not as rigorous. That is why, at the insistence of German officials, the Treaty of Maastricht included convergence criteria that must be met for joining the euro. The role of

¹ The Economist: Europe’s future is multi-speed and multi-tier, <https://www.economist.com/news/special-report/21719193-eu-must-embrace-greater-differentiation-or-face-potential-disintegration-europes>.

these conditions was to maintain the economically unreliable Southern European countries outside the monetary union.

At that time, Wolfgang Schäuble advocated a “variable geometry” approach within the euro area. The logic proposed by Schäuble was that monetary unification would be limited to a set of core countries as they call it, which in turn shared Germany's preference for austerity.

Schäuble explicitly presented his argument in a sketch for the euro area, co-authored by Karl Lamers and launched by the Christian Democratic Union of Germany in the late summer of 1994. His vision, adopted afterwards by his party, generated an important amount of criticism towards Schäuble. He said at that time that “we cannot determine the pace of European integration according to the slowest vessel in the convoy.”¹ Speed has been clearly defined in relation to the German standard, as enshrined in the Maastricht Convergence Criteria. Chancellor Kohl kept silent on the document of the two political leaders of the CDU, Schäuble-Lamers, describing their proposal as a “discussion paper”. However, he did not explicitly distance himself from the project proposed by Schäuble and defended the plan of a “basic” Europe².

20 years after the proposal was made, in August 2014 Schäuble and Lamers have brought back the debate on a multi-core Europe. The two reiterated the reason for the “variable geometry” proposed in 1994 in an article in the Financial Times. They conclude: “In order to make progress [...], we should continue to use the approach that has proved its momentum in 1994: to establish cores of cooperation within the European Union that allow smaller and more desirable groups of Member States to move forward”³. It should be noted that the article recognizes the crucial role of Germany and France in restoring the credibility of fiscal policy of the rules of the Stability Pact from 2003.

It should be noted that, despite its proposals on the structure of the European community, Schäuble's commitment to European integration and to the future of the European project cannot be questioned. A very good description of Wolfgang Schäuble was made by IMF General Manager Christine Lagarde when Schäuble was awarded the 2012 Charlemagne Prize⁴. Schäuble's political history shows that his commitment to “variable geometry” remained as strong, even when his statements on support for Grexit created a rupture within the German government with Chancellor Angela Merkel⁵.

2) Multi- speeds Europe from the early 2000s.

“So if the European Union's alternative to the undeniable challenge of Eastern enlargement is indeed erosion or integration, and if joining a federation of states would mean stagnation with all its negative repercussions, then under the pressure of conditions and The European Union will face this alternative at some point in the next ten years: will a majority of Member States make the leap in full integration and agree on a European constitution? Or, if this is not the case, a smaller group of Member States will

¹ (Loedel, 1999, p. 189),

https://books.google.ro/books?id=AYX8FIU8e_oC&pg=PA205&lpg=PA205&dq=Core+Euro+Proposal+Draws+Fire+From+EU+Members,+Opposition+Parties+1994&source=bl&ots=gOKSRAKTTM&sig=YI_z_McZko6XJ0qPqv19bmPUyLM&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjm7abDpfnUAhVCYZoKHYpEBpcQ6AEIMDAC#v=onepage&q&f=false.

² (Loedel, 1999, p. 190).

³ (Lamers & Schäuble, 2014)

<https://www.ft.com/content/5565f134-2d48-11e4-8105-00144feabdc0?mhq5j=e2>.

⁴ Lagarde (2012): „Today, no one has done more than my dear friend, Wolfgang Schäuble, to support the cause of European integration and the destiny of unified Germany in a united Europe. No one is more worthy of Charlemagne's charisma or the most meritorious of the Charlemagne Prize” - Lagarde, C. (2012), “The Legacy of Charlemagne -- Wolfgang Schäuble and European Integration,” IMF, May 16. <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2015/09/28/04/53/sp051612>

⁵ “There are many people, too, in the German federal government who are quite convinced that (Grexit) would be a much better solution for Greece and the Greek people”, said Schäuble in Brussels, (Turner, 2015), July 15 <http://www.politico.eu/article/german-finance-minister-schauble-undermines-greek-deal-grexit-merkel/>

take this route as an *avant-garde*, meaning there will be a center of gravity involving a few Member States who are firmly committed to the European ideal and are in a position to continue Political integration? The question then would simply be: when will it be the right time? Who will be involved? And will this center of gravity appear within or outside the framework provided by the treaties? One thing is at least certain: no European project will succeed in the future without the closest French-German cooperation, ¹says Joschka Fischer in May 2000 in his speech at Humboldt University.

His speech, though considered controversial at the time, was welcomed, in the French and German circles, in a positive way. Former French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine said the debate on the European vision of his German counterpart was a good idea, saying to *Le Monde* that “no solution should be neglected.” Commentators in the German press had a generally positive view of Fischer's remarks, although they also highlighted what they saw as some of the shortcomings of the speech. “With a remarkable speech, in some sensational passages about the future of Europe, Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer has catapulted himself to the top of European creators,” wrote Martin Winter in *Frankfurter Rundschau*.

At the same time, Martin Winter highlighted that “Fischer has combined ideas already on the table in a way that will give them a new quality and make them a compelling plan for Europe for the future.”

In *Die Welt*, Michael Inacker said that Fischer “was very successful,” stressing that “he avoided the question of whether there might be different types of EU membership in the future and he remained vague in other controversial areas such as the subject of a European army “.

Quo vadis Europa? This question has been frequently asked in the European Union over time. The crucial moments for the future of the Union have emerged steadily. The route and goal of European integration has been a topic that has always generated interest. The speech of the former German Foreign Minister on May 12, 2000, at Humboldt University in Berlin, and the debate he launched, clearly demonstrated that the European Union was then in the face of a crucial decision for the future of the Union. Will the way be a construction based on international treaties of *sui generis* law, to be a constituted state? What role will the Member States play in the future? What will be the division of tasks into a future EU? These were questions that were raised in the European Union in 2000.

However, Fischer's approach to a nation-state federation was partly criticized as a possible renationalisation of Europe. Johannes Voggenhuber, a member of the parliamentary group of the Greens in the European Parliament, in a speech at the Forum Constitutionis Europae of the Walter Hallstein Institute for Europe Constitutional Law on June 22, 2000, considers Fischer Europe as a step back towards a more relaxed confederation, a Europe of nation states in the sense that de Gaulle used the concept².

However, Fischer has benefited from a support of his ideas from the French. Jacques Chirac, by rejecting the idea of a “super-state of Europe” instead of the nation states, precisely supports the model that Fischer proposes. However, Chirac avoids the concept of federation, as is clear from his speech before the German Bundestag on June 27, 2000³. At the same time, as far as Chirac is concerned, the difference between the nation and the national states is not quite clear, leaving the impression that he uses the concepts in a synonymous way.

¹ (Fischer, 2000) <http://ec.europa.eu/dorie/fileDownload.do?docId=192161&cardId=192161>.

² Juristische Fakultät Walter Hallstein-Institut <https://plone.rewi.hu-berlin.de/de/lf/oe/whi/FCE/2000>.

³ Address given by Jacques Chirac to the Bundestag entitled *Our Europe* (Berlin, 27 June 2000) https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2005/1/20/6a747c46-88db-47ec-bc8c-55c8b161f4dc/publishable_en.pdf.

In his speech, Chirac confirms and supports the idea of a two-speed Union. The French president urged the German government to join Paris to assume the role of a “core group” of the European Union countries that would move faster than others in economic and political cooperation. Chirac had this speech a few days before the French assumed the presidency of the European Union in 2000.

The discussion in the year 2000 was synthesized by David Schneider-Addae-Mensah, adding that “on the road to federalization, it would be possible to form a” center of gravity “as the core of a constitution of the federation. A group of states would go further here by signing a basic European treaty as an avant-garde of political integration but would be open at any time to each of the other EU members.”¹

As can be seen, in crucial times for the European Union, there is a discussion of the need for more speeds or concentric centers. Both Schauble and Lamers and Fischer's speech, along with Chirac's speech in 2000, come in political contexts that can redefine the future of the European Union. In 1994, the euro area was the main subject, talking about the conditions underlying the monetary union, while at the beginning of the 2000s the main issue was regarding a constitution of the European Union to replace all existing treaties.

All these reconfiguration scenarios of the European Union have sparked emotions, but, in particular, political controversy. However, by analyzing the structure already existing within the European Union, we can see that the scenario of the concentric circles already exists. Their recognition at the official level only creates a form of discrimination between states in the center of the Union and the periphery, between those who consider themselves the Union's elite and those who are seen as marginal. This structure of the European Union on the basis of concentric circles of power is, however, nothing but an adequacy of the situation of the Member States to the obvious reality. Some EU state leaders do not accept this, and an explanation for this attitude may be the danger of populists and nationalists who would use such a state confirmation within the European Union as part of political propaganda.

If we look at existing policies and treaties, we will notice that this differentiation between Member States is a reality. There is, for example, the European Economic Area, of which Switzerland and Norway are full members, which gives them full access to the single market without their participation in other policies that could harm their economies. Such situations include those concerning the United Kingdom and Ireland that are not in the Schengen area, Denmark and Sweden that are not part of the euro area. But in the case of Denmark, it chose to fix its currency to the euro through the European currency exchange mechanism, while Sweden did not.

The Euro Zone, the Schengen-free travel area, internal affairs issues, patent and tax rules, all these policies already accommodate the flexible coalitions of countries that try to integrate at different stages or, in some cases, give up.

The 4 “concentric circles” relevant in European structures are:

1. Members of the European Union, 27, if we already exclude the United Kingdom;
2. Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), with 26 EU members, Denmark being an opt-out member;
3. Schengen Area - 22 EU members; Are not part of Schengen at this time: Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland;

¹ David Schneider-Addae-Mensah, *The Current European Constitutional Debate in the Wake of the Fischer Speech*, <http://www.simons-law.com/library/pdf/e/27.pdf>.

4. Euro Area - 19 EU members; Are not part of the Eurozone at this moment: Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Sweden, Denmark.

However, the idea of multi-speeds remains controversial because it could involve different classes of members in what should be a partnership between equal members. Indeed, it is the main starting point in the discussions around a European Union declaration on its future.

The alarm signal regarding the possibility of a multi-speed Europe has spread to several Eastern and Baltic European capitals, especially since Angela Merkel has begun to contemplate a Europe with “variable speeds”.

The events in Europe over the last two years (immigration crisis, Brexit, scenarios on the future of the European Union), together with Donald Trump's election as president of the United States of America, are the main signs that we are entering a new era characterized by instability, uncertainty, frustration, deepening of the paradigm system vs. anti-system, the intensification of disputed movements, increased violence, very rapid changes in the political and economic context, disintegration tendencies at European and national level, as well as a recurrence of nationalist currents and identity flaws.

Faced with new challenges, both external and internal, the European order seeks to defend itself, find the most appropriate responses and (re) adjustments to new realities. These efforts sometimes succeed, sometimes not. Following the shock of migration, Brexit, and Donald Trump's election, the European agenda is full and send to the public both contradictory, positive and negative messages.

To open the debate, the European Commission turned to the scenario method. As a matter of fact, we are witnessing an enactment of the political context of the years 1994 and 2000, when Europe was at crossroads. This time, the immigration crisis and Brexit have backed the two scenarios, the concentric circles and Europe with multi-speeds.

The crisis that the European Union is going through in 2017 makes the two scenarios benefit from support from more and more states. Not just France and Germany.

In this respect, there is a parallel between the immigration crisis and the positioning of the states towards the policy of Europe with more speeds or that of the concentric circles.

Europe responded to the crisis of immigrants with simple decisions. A simple decision was made on the part of the European Union when quotas were set. These quotas were not established through a direct negotiation with states that were not very prepared, culturally, mentally, and at the societal level, to suddenly accept a wave of thousands of people from another culture. And then, especially in this eastern area of the European Union, fear arose.

The scenario solution, proposed by the European Commission, together with the theme of Europe with concentric circles, has made the fear of exclusion in the area of the states on the periphery of the European Union. The way in which decisions have been taken since the immigration crisis began, have shown a violation of the principles underlying the adoption of decisions in the European Union. Enforcing decisions has replaced debate and consensus.

This way of making decisions within the Union has led to an increase in the level of mistrust in European institutions by citizens. The fragility of trust and the threat of migration have made Euroscepticism in the European Union to increase. This phenomenon occurred predominantly in the European states with a high economic level, which were affected by the immigration wave and the phenomenon of Euroscepticism, corroborated with the advance of the nationalists.

After European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker presented a report on March 1st, presenting the possibilities for the future of the European bloc after Brexit, there was a growing debate about the fact that a multi-speed Europe could be the solution chosen by European leaders to solve all the problems. But, in fact, this variation would only represent a violation of the principles underpinning the functioning of the European Union.

The hypothesis behind this research is that at the level of the Member States of the European Union with a high economic level there is nonetheless a non-unitary approach to the subject of Europe with more concentric circles or more speeds. The Member States of the European Union affected by the wave of immigrants support the idea of Europe with concentric circles or multi-speeds, having in mind to create a buffer zone around the states in the European Union's tough nucleus, while economically developed countries with increased living standards, but not affected by the immigration wave, have a different approach, supporting the idea of a united Europe, a development of all European states. At the same time, it should be noted that in countries with a strong economy and affected by the immigration wave, they have also witnessed an increase in the degree of Euroscepticism and nationalist discourse.

The analysis envisages a different perspective of the European states, similar from the point of view of the economic indicator, but affected in a proportionally different way from the immigration wave in 2015-2016. In this respect, the indicators related to the level of migration, economic level, corroborating the public discourse of the officials of the European states are the basis of the research.

The Economic Analysis of the European Union

The European economy is working well, despite a series of challenges it has encountered over the last 10 years, as is shown by Eurostat's statistical data. The economic growth within the Union continued until 2017, which led to the marking of four years of moderate and uninterrupted economic growth. Concerns about high uncertainty provide a way to improve the economic sphere, although this has not yet been reflected in important economic indicators. Recent data show steady economic growth at a steady pace, supported by macroeconomic policies, job creation, strong confidence, gradual improvement in world trade and the relatively low exchange rate of the euro.

The last decade has made economic developments in the eurozone affected by large shocks that have been accompanied by economic and political uncertainty. These include the global economic and financial crisis, the sovereign debt crisis, the slowdown in world trade and the tensions in the banking sector. In recent years, a number of other events have also led to uncertainty: geopolitical tensions, Brexit's vote, potential changes in the major policy areas of the new US administration, and political uncertainty in some Member States. Investments in the euro area have been discretionary for a long period of time, and increased uncertainty has often been cited as a determining factor alongside weak fundamentals (current and potential weak demand, declining bank lending, households and companies).

In its spring forecast, the European Commission forecasts GDP growth in the euro area of 1.7% in 2017 and 1.8% in 2018 (1.6% and 1.8% in winter forecasts). Overall, GDP growth in the EU is expected to remain constant at 1.9% in both years (1.8% in both years in the winter forecast).

According to data from the European Commission's spring forecasts, euro area economic growth will advance by 1.7% in 2017, while an increase of 1.8% is projected for 2018. For the Member States of the Union, the projected average growth for 2017 amounts to 1.9%, similar to 2018.

Table 1:

Overview - the spring 2017 forecast

	Real GDP			Inflation			Unemployment rate			Current account			Budget balance		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Belgium	1.2	1.5	1.7	1.8	2.3	1.5	7.8	7.6	7.4	1.2	1.5	1.7	-2.6	-1.9	-2.0
Germany	1.9	1.6	1.9	0.4	1.7	1.4	4.1	4.0	3.9	8.5	8.0	7.6	0.8	0.5	0.3
Estonia	1.6	2.3	2.8	0.8	3.3	2.9	6.8	7.7	8.6	2.0	1.1	1.2	0.3	-0.3	-0.5
Ireland	5.2	4.0	3.6	-0.2	0.6	1.2	7.9	6.4	5.9	4.7	4.8	5.0	-0.6	-0.5	-0.3
Greece	0.0	2.1	2.5	0.0	1.2	1.1	23.6	22.8	21.6	-0.5	-0.5	-0.3	0.7	-1.2	0.6
Spain	3.2	2.8	2.4	-0.3	2.0	1.4	19.6	17.6	15.9	1.9	1.6	1.6	-4.5	-3.2	-2.6
France	1.2	1.4	1.7	0.3	1.4	1.3	10.1	9.9	9.6	-2.3	-2.4	-2.5	-3.4	-3.0	-3.2
Italy	0.9	0.9	1.1	-0.1	1.5	1.3	11.7	11.5	11.3	2.6	1.9	1.7	-2.4	-2.2	-2.3
Cyprus	2.8	2.5	2.3	-1.2	1.2	1.1	13.1	11.7	10.6	-5.7	-5.9	-6.3	0.4	0.2	0.7
Latvia	2.0	3.2	3.5	0.1	2.2	2.0	9.6	9.2	8.7	1.9	-0.9	-2.6	0.0	-0.8	-1.8
Lithuania	2.3	2.9	3.1	0.7	2.8	2.0	7.9	7.6	7.2	-1.1	-2.0	-1.9	0.3	-0.4	-0.2
Luxembourg	4.2	4.3	4.4	0.0	2.4	1.8	6.3	6.1	6.0	4.7	4.5	5.0	1.6	0.2	0.3
Malta	5.0	4.6	4.4	0.9	1.6	1.8	4.7	4.9	4.9	7.9	6.5	9.0	1.0	0.5	0.8
Netherlands	2.2	2.1	1.8	0.1	1.6	1.3	6.0	4.9	4.4	7.9	7.4	7.1	0.4	0.5	0.8
Austria	1.5	1.7	1.7	1.0	1.8	1.6	6.0	5.9	5.9	2.1	2.0	2.2	-1.6	-1.3	-1.0
Portugal	1.4	1.8	1.6	0.6	1.4	1.5	11.2	9.9	9.2	0.5	0.5	0.5	-2.0	-1.8	-1.9
Slovenia	2.5	3.3	3.1	-0.2	1.5	1.8	8.0	7.2	6.3	7.0	6.2	5.8	-1.8	-1.4	-1.2
Slovakia	3.3	3.0	3.6	-0.5	1.4	1.6	9.7	8.6	7.6	0.2	0.1	0.4	-1.7	-1.3	-0.6
Finland	1.4	1.3	1.7	0.4	1.0	1.2	8.8	8.6	8.2	-1.3	-1.8	-1.6	-1.9	-2.2	-1.8
Euro area	1.8	1.7	1.8	0.2	1.6	1.3	10.0	9.4	8.9	3.4	3.0	2.9	-1.5	-1.4	-1.3
Bulgaria	3.4	2.9	2.8	-1.3	1.3	1.5	7.6	7.0	6.4	4.2	2.4	1.8	0.0	-0.4	-0.3
Czech Republic	2.4	2.6	2.7	0.6	2.5	2.0	4.0	3.5	3.5	0.3	0.0	-0.2	0.6	0.3	0.1
Denmark	1.3	1.7	1.8	0.0	1.4	1.7	6.2	5.8	5.7	8.1	7.8	7.7	-0.9	-1.3	-0.9
Croatia	2.9	2.9	2.6	-0.6	1.6	1.5	13.3	11.6	9.7	2.6	2.9	1.3	-0.8	-1.1	-0.9
Hungary	2.0	3.6	3.5	0.4	2.9	3.2	5.1	4.1	3.9	5.0	3.5	2.8	-1.8	-2.3	-2.4
Poland	2.7	3.5	3.2	-0.2	1.8	2.1	6.2	5.2	4.4	0.2	-0.6	-1.2	-2.4	-2.9	-2.9
Romania	4.8	4.3	3.7	-1.1	1.1	3.0	5.9	5.4	5.3	-2.4	-2.8	-2.9	-3.0	-3.5	-3.7
Sweden	3.3	2.6	2.2	1.1	1.4	1.4	6.9	6.6	6.6	4.9	5.2	5.4	0.9	0.4	0.7
United Kingdom	1.8	1.8	1.3	0.7	2.6	2.6	4.8	5.0	5.4	-4.4	-3.9	-3.2	-3.0	-3.0	-2.3
EU	1.9	1.9	1.9	0.3	1.8	1.7	8.5	8.0	7.7	2.1	1.9	1.9	-1.7	-1.6	-1.5
USA	1.6	2.2	2.3	1.3	2.2	2.3	4.9	4.6	4.5	-2.5	-2.8	-3.3	-4.8	-4.7	-5.2
Japan	1.0	1.2	0.6	-0.1	0.4	1.0	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.9	4.1	4.2	-3.7	-4.2	-3.6
China	6.7	6.6	6.3	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
World	3.0	3.4	3.6	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

Figure 1. Overview spring 2017 forecast – economic

Source: Standard Eurobarometer 87 survey (EB87)

With regard to the economic developments in the European Union, there is an increase of more than 1% in most countries, with the exception of Italy, which for the year 2017 has a growth forecast of 0.9% and for 2018 1.1%. With regard to the euro area countries, Malta will register the largest increase (4.6% in 2017), followed by Luxembourg (4.3% in 2017) and Ireland (4.0% in 2017). The other euro area countries have values below 4% growth for 2017: Belgium (1.5%), Germany (1.6%), Estonia (2.3%), Greece (2.1%), Spain (2.8%), France (1.4%), Cyprus (2.5%), Latvia (3.2%), Lithuania (2.9%), 7), Portugal (1.8%), Slovenia (3.3%), Slovakia (3.0%), Finland (1.3%).

Concerning the Member States of the European Union, but not part of the euro area, the largest economic growth is registered by Romania (4.3% in 2017), followed by Hungary (3.6%) and Poland (3.5%). The other Member States are under a 3% increase: Bulgaria (2.9%), Czech Republic (2.6%), Denmark (1.7%), Croatia (2.9%), The United Kingdom (1.8%).

Economic growth, however, offers the tendency that the Member States of the Union make in economic terms. This is a positive one, which comes after long periods of crisis.

With regard to the nominal GDP of the European Union Member States in 2016, it is noted that the most powerful countries in the Union remain Germany (EUR 3,132.670 billion), the United Kingdom (EUR 2,367,596 billion), France (EUR 2,225,260 billion), Italy (EURO 1,672,438 billion), Spain (EURO 1,113.851 billion).

This country's top five countries are mainly from Western Europe: the Netherlands (696.871), Sweden (462.417), Poland (424.581), Belgium (421.974), Austria (349.493), Denmark (277.336), Ireland (265.835) Finland (214.062), Portugal (185.035), Greece (175.888), Czech Republic (174.452), Romania (168.078), Hungary (112.399), Slovakia (80.958), Luxembourg (54.195) Slovenia (39,769), Lithuania (38,631), Latvia (25,018), Estonia (20,916), Cyprus (17,901), Malta (9,898).

The Reality of Migration in Europe

Migration is influenced by a combination of economic, environmental, political and social factors: either in the country of origin of the migrants (rejection factors) or in the country of destination (attraction factors). Historically, it seems that the relative economic prosperity and political stability of the EU have had a considerable effect on immigrants.

Almost two-thirds of all international migrants live in Europe (76 million) or Asia (75 million). North America hosted the third largest number of international migrants (54 million), followed by Africa (21 million), Latin America and the Caribbean (9 million) and Oceania (8 million), according to a report Of the UN.

Number of international migrants by major area of destination, 2000 and 2015

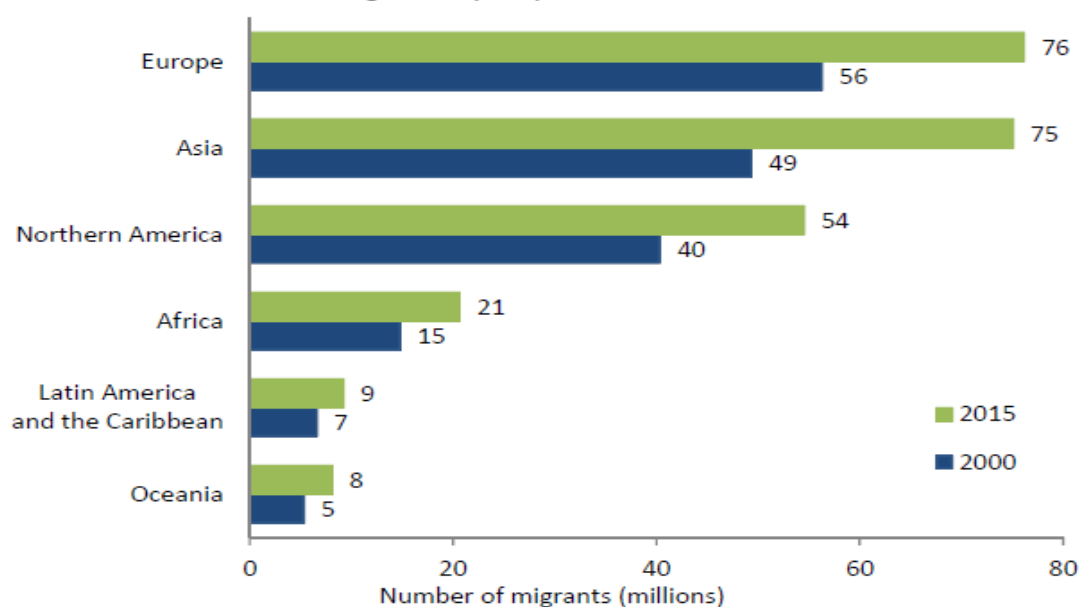


Figure 2. Number of migrants;

Source: UN International Migration Report 2015

Taking into account these figures, migration is one of the political priorities of the Juncker Commission, as the European institution says. The main purpose is to address the issue in a comprehensive way. The Commission's migration agenda sets out the immediate measures needed to prevent human tragedies and to strengthen emergency responses.

The continued development and integration of European migration policy remains a key priority to meet the challenges and to capitalize on the opportunities that migration represents globally. The integration of third-country workers legally resident in EU Member States has gained increasing importance on the European agenda in recent years.

A total of 4.7 million people emigrated to one of the EU-28 member states in 2015, while at least 2.8 million emigrants have left a EU Member State. These figures do not represent migration flows to / from the EU as a whole, as they also include flows between different EU Member States.

Of these 4.7 million immigrants in 2015, there were about 2.4 million third-country nationals, 1.4 million citizens of a Member State other than the one they emigrated, about 860 thousand people migrated to a Member State where they were citizens (for example, nationals or foreign-born nationals) and about 19 thousand stateless persons.

Germany reported the highest total number of immigrants (1,543.8 thousand) in 2015, followed by the United Kingdom (631.5 thousand), France (363.9 thousand), Spain (342.1 thousand) and Italy (280.1 thousand). Germany reported the largest number of emigrants in 2015 (347.2 thousand), followed by Spain (343.9 thousand), the United Kingdom (299.2 thousand), France (298 thousand) and Poland (258.8 thousand). A total of 17 EU Member States reported more immigration than emigration in 2015, but in Bulgaria, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Cyprus, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Latvia and Lithuania, the number of migrants exceeded the number of immigrants.

	Total immigrants			Non-nationals							
	Nationals			Total		Citizens of other EU Member States		Citizens of non-member countries		Stateless	
	(thousands)	(thousands)	(%)	(thousands)	(%)	(thousands)	(%)	(thousands)	(%)	(thousands)	(%)
Belgium	146.6	17.9	12.2	127.7	87.1	61.8	42.2	65.8	44.9	0.0	0.0
Bulgaria	25.2	10.7	42.5	14.4	57.1	1.4	5.7	12.9	50.9	0.1	0.4
Czech Republic	29.6	4.5	15.1	25.1	84.9	14.5	49.0	10.6	35.9	0.0	0.0
Denmark	78.5	19.8	25.2	58.7	74.8	24.9	31.8	32.3	41.1	1.5	1.9
Germany	1 543.8	87.4	5.7	1 433.0	92.8	460.1	29.8	967.5	62.7	5.3	0.3
Estonia	15.4	8.0	52.2	7.4	47.8	3.2	20.7	3.7	23.7	0.5	3.4
Ireland	76.9	18.8	24.4	58.1	75.6	26.4	34.3	31.7	41.3	0.0	0.0
Greece	64.4	30.5	47.3	34.0	52.7	16.5	25.6	17.5	27.1	0.0	0.0
Spain	342.1	52.1	15.2	290.0	84.8	106.2	31.0	183.7	53.7	0.2	0.0
France	363.9	131.2	36.0	232.7	64.0	84.2	23.1	148.5	40.8	0.0	0.0
Croatia	11.7	6.5	55.4	5.2	44.6	2.2	18.7	3.0	25.8	0.0	0.0
Italy	280.1	30.1	10.7	250.0	89.3	63.5	22.7	186.5	66.6	0.0	0.0
Cyprus	15.2	3.2	20.8	12.0	79.2	6.1	40.2	5.9	39.0	0.0	0.0
Latvia	9.5	5.0	52.5	4.5	47.1	0.7	7.0	3.8	40.0	0.0	0.1
Lithuania	22.1	18.4	83.1	3.7	16.9	0.8	3.7	2.9	13.2	0.0	0.1
Luxembourg	23.8	1.2	5.0	22.6	94.8	16.4	69.0	6.1	25.8	0.0	0.0
Hungary	58.3	32.6	55.8	25.8	44.2	10.5	18.1	15.2	26.1	0.0	0.0
Malta	12.8	1.6	12.8	11.2	87.2	5.6	43.3	5.6	44.0	0.0	0.0
Netherlands	166.9	39.2	23.5	126.0	75.5	60.1	36.0	61.4	36.8	4.6	2.7
Austria	166.3	9.4	5.7	156.5	94.1	68.8	41.4	86.5	52.0	1.3	0.8
Poland	218.1	84.8	38.9	133.3	61.1	29.4	13.5	103.9	47.6	0.0	0.0
Portugal	29.9	14.9	50.0	14.9	50.0	6.4	21.2	6.6	28.7	0.0	0.0
Romania	132.8	115.5	87.0	17.2	13.0	8.2	6.2	9.0	6.8	0.0	0.0
Slovenia	15.4	2.8	17.9	12.7	82.1	2.8	17.9	9.9	64.2	0.0	0.0
Slovakia	7.0	3.2	46.1	3.8	53.9	3.1	44.4	0.7	9.5	0.0	0.0
Finland	28.7	7.3	25.5	20.8	72.3	7.6	26.5	13.1	45.6	0.1	0.2
Sweden	134.2	20.4	15.2	113.4	84.4	29.8	22.2	78.2	58.2	5.4	4.1
United Kingdom	631.5	83.6	13.2	547.8	86.8	269.2	42.6	278.6	44.1	0.0	0.0
Iceland	5.6	1.8	31.6	3.9	68.4	3.1	55.0	0.7	13.2	0.0	0.3
Liechtenstein	0.7	0.2	24.8	0.5	75.2	0.3	41.2	0.2	33.9	0.0	0.0
Norway	60.8	6.9	11.3	53.9	88.7	27.1	44.6	26.0	42.8	0.8	1.4
Switzerland	153.6	26.0	16.9	127.6	83.1	90.2	58.7	37.4	24.3	0.0	0.0

Note: the individual values do not add up to the total due to rounding and the exclusion of the 'unknown' citizenship group from the table.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_imm1ctz)

Figure 3. Immigration by citizenship

Source: Eurostat

In absolute terms, the largest number of non-resident citizens living in EU Member States on 1 January 2016 were found in Germany (8.7 million people), United Kingdom (5.6 million), Italy (5.0 million), Spain (4.4 million) and France (4.4 million). Foreign citizens in these five Member States collectively accounted for 76% of the total number of foreign citizens living in all EU Member States, while the same five Member States had a share of 63% of the EU-28 population.

The number of first asylum seekers in Germany has increased from 442,000 in 2015 to 722,000 in 2016. Greece and Italy have also reported large increases between 2015 and 2016. In relative terms, the largest increase in the number of applicants for the first time was recorded in Croatia (over 15 times), Slovenia (almost five times higher) and Greece (more than four times higher). Instead, Austria, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Hungary and Sweden reported less than half of the first asylum seekers in 2016, as in 2015.

Germany's share of the EU-28 total rose from 35% in 2015 to 60% in 2016, while other EU Member States that saw a notable increase in their share in the EU-28 included Italy (3.4 % to 10.1%) in Greece (3.2% to 4.1%). On the contrary, the share of Hungary and Sweden in the EU-28 total fell by more than 10 % between 2015 and 2016, registering a decrease of 1% or higher in Austria, Finland, Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark.

Analysis of Economic and Migration Indicators

It is noted that the top states from the economic point of view (as a nominal level of GDP) are the ones that attract the largest number of immigrants. Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Spain and Italy are the countries with the largest GDP in Europe, and together they reported the largest number of immigrants in 2015, the five countries accounting for a total of 3,161.4 thousand immigrants.

The countries most affected by the immigration wave that came over Europe in the years 2015-2016 are, to a large extent, those countries with a high GDP and a level of wage above the European average.

After analyzing the economic figures and those referring to the number of immigrants and asylum seekers coming from non-EU countries, it is noted that they mainly chose EU Member States which, from the point of view of GDP, are ranked in the top 11 positions. But there are exceptions of countries that either do not belong to this category or are found, but they did not represent a destination for immigrants.

The European countries most affected by the immigration wave were Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium, Austria and Denmark. These countries are in the top 11 positions as nominal GDP. Spain and Poland, respectively countries ranked 5th and 8th as nominal GDP, are less affected. On the other hand, it can be seen that countries with a lower economic level than those that rank among the top 11 positions in the GDP of the EU Member States are affected

by the immigration wave. Thus, Finland, Greece, Hungary or Bulgaria, although not at an economic level similar to the first 11, were destination countries for a significant number of immigrants.

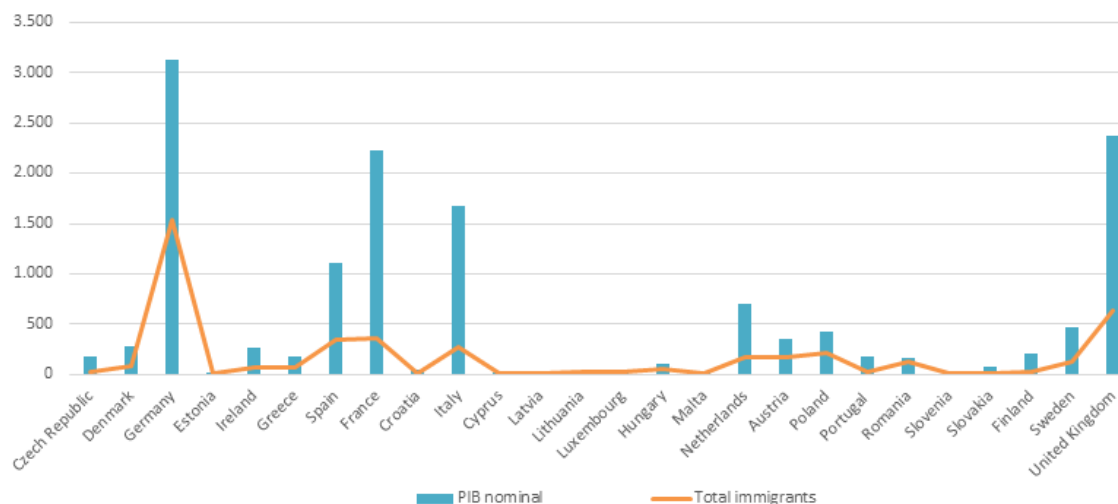


Figure 4. Nominal GDP vs Total immigrants.

Source: Eurostat

The rest of the EU Member States have been less affected by the immigration wave in 2015 and 2016. At the same time, it should be noted that in 2016, as a result of the decisions taken at a political level by a number of Member States of the European Union, such as Hungary, Austria or Slovenia, to close borders or raise fences against immigrants, the number of asylum applications from non-EU countries have declined considerably in some countries, but have grown to other countries that could no longer be transited. For example, the largest decrease in the number of asylum seekers was registered in Hungary in 2016, from 177.4 thousand to 28.2 thousand, following the decision taken by the Budapest government to raise metal fences at the border Hungary. Stopping immigrants at the border of the European Union and the Schengen area has led to a decrease in the number of asylum applications in other countries in 2016, such as Denmark, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK. In contrast, the number of asylum applications increased significantly in Germany in 2016, from 441.8 thousand in 2015 to 722.3 thousand in 2016. Also, as a result of the blocking of immigrants at the EU border, the number of requests for asylum also grew in Greece from 11.4 thousand to 49.9 thousand in 2016.

A high level of asylum requests has also been maintained in France, Italy or Spain, but in these cases we also talk about migration from North Africa to Europe.

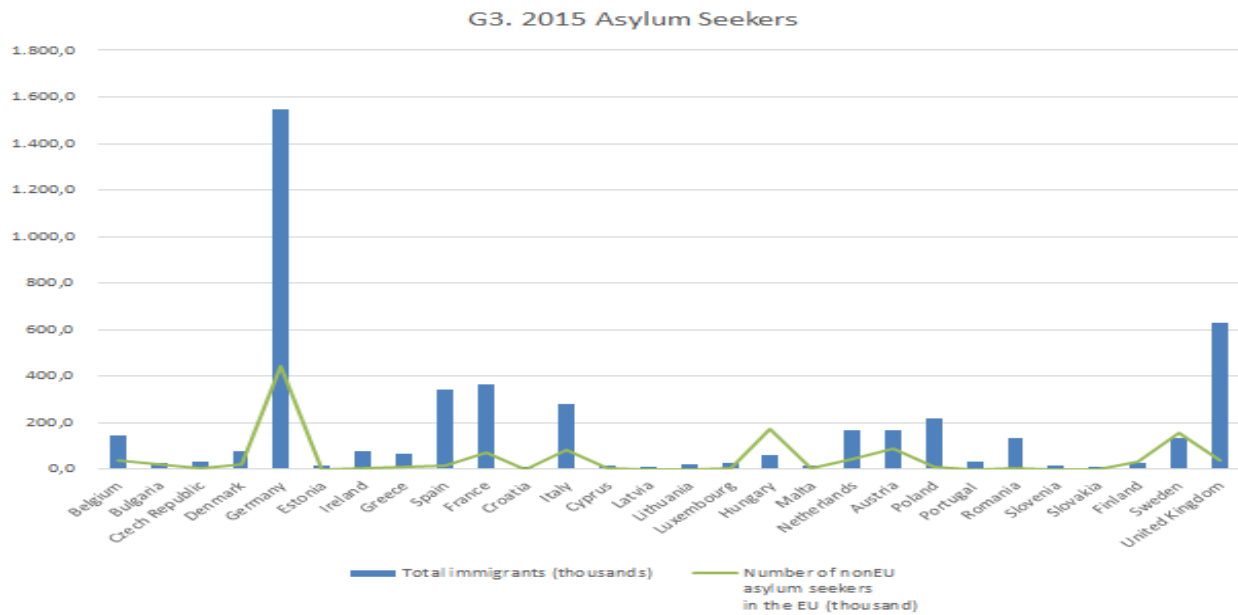


Figure 5. Total immigrants (thousands) vs Number of non-EU asylum seekers in the EU (thousands) 2015
 Source: Eurostat

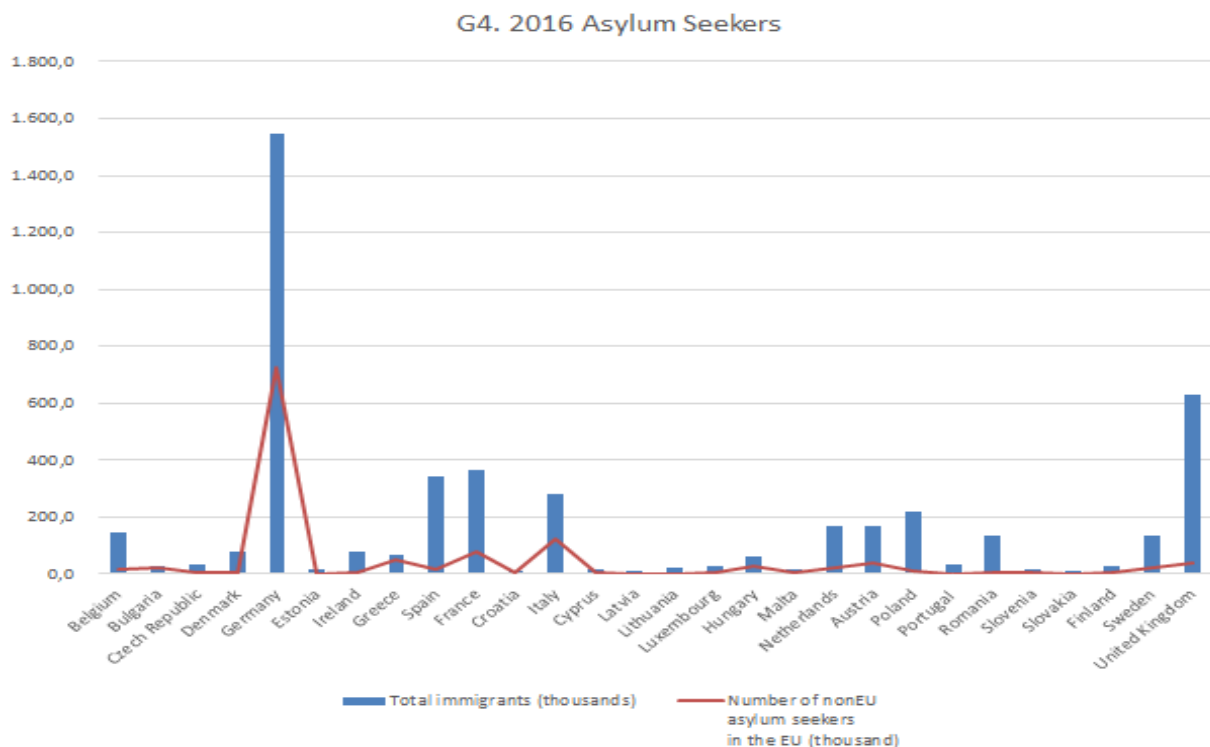


Figure 6. Total immigrants (thousands) vs Number of non-EU asylum seekers in the EU (thousands) 2016
 Source: Eurostat

Analyzing the destination of the immigrants as well as the map of the route they have chosen on their way to Europe, it is noted that the countries on their way are the most affected. The final destinations of

immigrants were, as can be seen from Eurostat figures, Germany, France, Italy, Great Britain and Sweden, countries with high GDP and wages. The large number of immigrants and asylum seekers in countries such as Greece, Bulgaria, Hungary or Austria is explained by the fact that they represented the fastest way for immigrants to the states in the central and northern Europe.

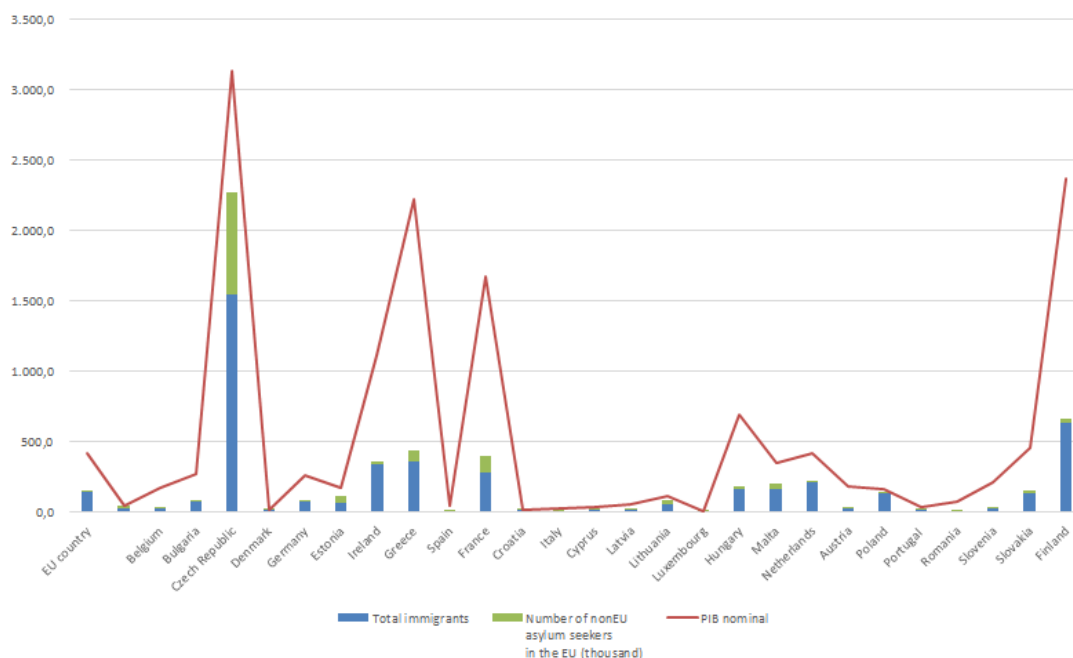


Figure 7. Total immigrants vs Number of non-EU asylum seekers in the EU vs nominal GDP.

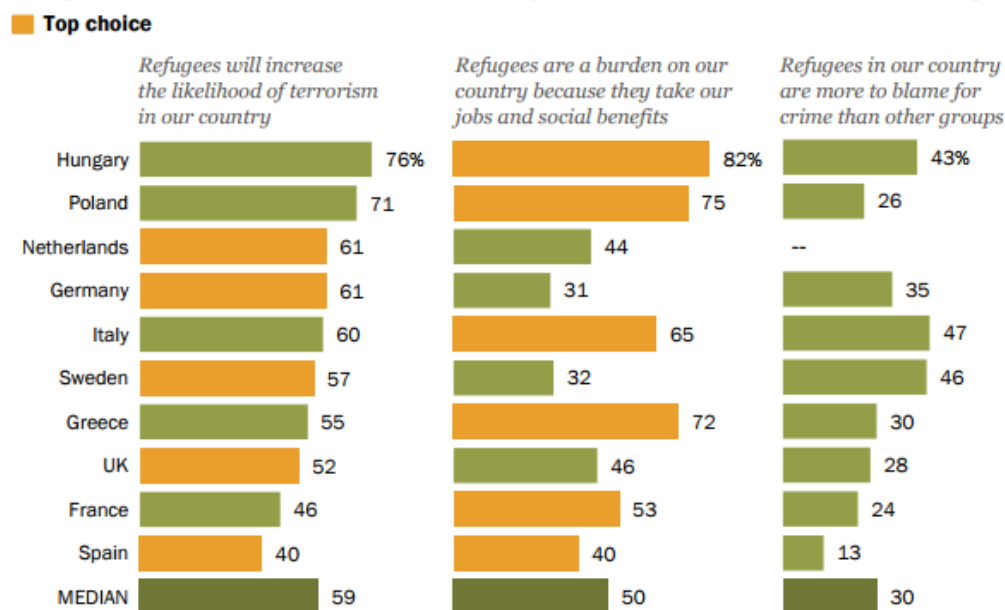
Source: Eurostat

At the same time, the large number of asylum applications in Hungary and Austria can be explained by the provisions of the Dublin Regulation, that determines which Member State is responsible for processing asylum seekers from outside the European Union. In general, the country where an asylum seeker enters the Union for the first time is responsible for registering the asylum application and fingerprinting. But there are exceptions, including some to unite or reunite families. As a result, asylum seekers moving to other countries after they have been registered can be sent back to the country responsible for processing their claims, dubbed “Dublin transfers.” Many immigrants are trying to circumvent the system by refusing to be imprinted and thus avoid being registered in the first country where they arrive, most of the time Italy or Greece.

European Opinion on Refugees

Europeans fear the wave of refugees believing they will mean more terrorism, fewer jobs, according to a study published by the Pew Research Center in July 2016.

Many Europeans concerned with security, economic repercussions of refugee crisis



Note: Netherlands excluded on question about crime (Q51b) due to administrative error.

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey, Q51a-c.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 8. Europeans Fear Wave of Refugees Will Mean More Terrorism, Fewer Jobs.

Source: Pew Research Center 2016

The recent rise of refugees in Europe has prominently emerged in the anti-immigration rhetoric of mainland parties and in the heated debate over the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union. At the same time, attacks in European capitals fueled public fears about terrorism. As a study by the Pew Research Center shows, the refugee crisis and the threat of terrorism are largely linked to each other in the minds of many Europeans. In eight out of ten European nations questioned, half or more believe that receiving refugees increases the likelihood of terrorism in their country.

According to Pew Research, refugees are considered a burden on European citizens for their country because they take their jobs and social benefits.

Analysis of Citizens' Confidence in National Governments and in the European Union

The crises that affected the European Union in terms of migration and its threats, as well as terrorist attacks, created a sense of instability and insecurity, which is reinforced by geopolitical uncertainties, especially by Brexit. On March 1st, 2017, the European Commission presented a White Paper on the future of Europe, which presents challenges and opportunities for Europe in the next decade. This Chart also proposes five scenarios, one of which refers to Europe with more speeds.

Analyzing citizens' confidence in national and European institutions is a way to explain some of the decisions taken by the EU Member States in the context of discussing the future of the European bloc.

What can be seen from the Eurobarometer data released in April 2017 is that almost half of respondents tend to trust the European Union (47%), 11 percentage points more than in autumn 2016. Also, four out of ten respondents (40%) tend to trust their national government, and this time it recorded an increase of nine points compared to autumn 2016.

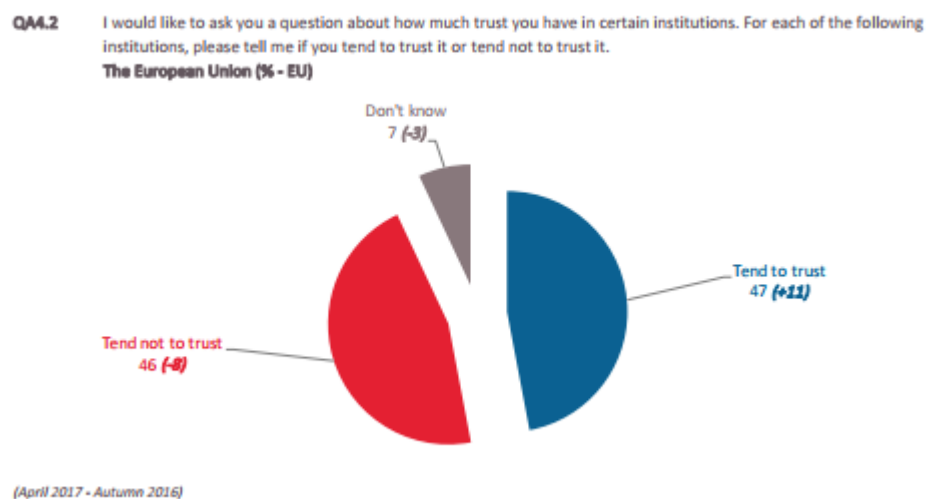


Figure 9. Trust in the European Union.

Source: Special Eurobarometer 461 - Designing Europe's future, April 2017

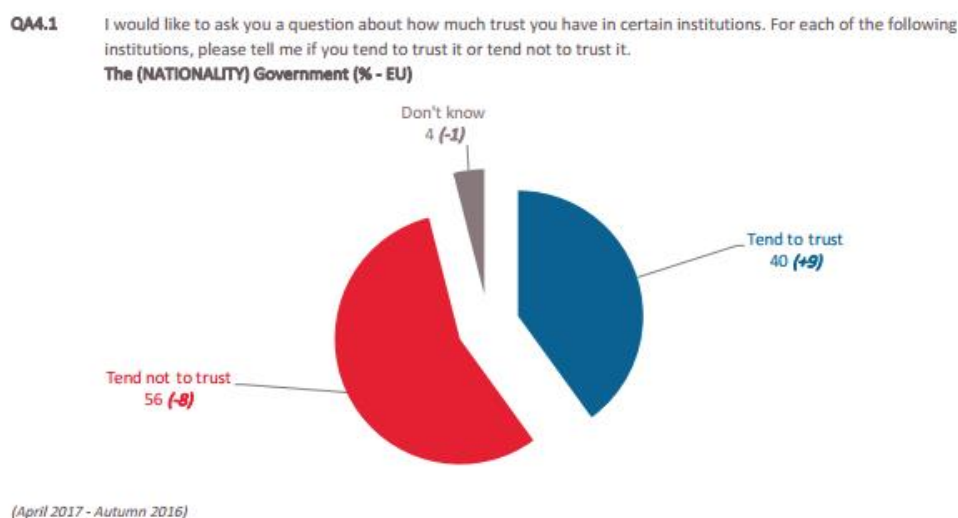


Figure 10. Trust in the national Government.

Source: Special Eurobarometer 461 - Designing Europe's future, April 2017

Regarding the confidence in national governments, according to the Eurobarometer, in ten countries most respondents tend to trust their national government: the Netherlands, Sweden, Luxembourg, Finland, Germany, Denmark, Austria, Estonia, Portugal, Malta. Also in 18 countries, only a minority of respondents tend to trust their national government: Hungary, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Ireland, Romania, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Lithuania, Cyprus, Greece.

Almost eight out of ten respondents in the Netherlands (78%) trust the national government, followed by 72% in Sweden and 70% in Luxembourg. In contrast, less than one in five respondents in Greece (13%), Slovenia (17%) and Spain (18%) trust their national government.

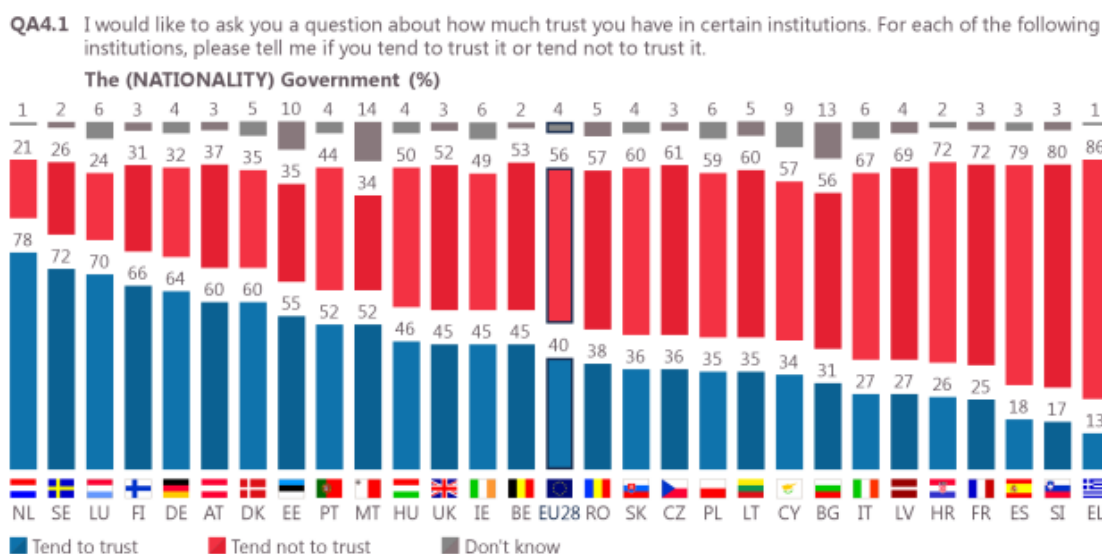


Figure 11. Trust in the national Government.

Source: Special Eurobarometer 461 - Designing Europe's future, April 2017

The percentage of respondents who tended to trust their national government increased in 23 Member States, especially in Austria (60%, +20 percentage points compared to autumn 2016), the Netherlands (78%, +19%), Estonia (55%, +18%), Sweden (72%, +16), Denmark (60%, +14%), Portugal (52%, +13%), Germany (64%, +13%), Italy (27%, +12 pp), Hungary (46%, +11%) and the United Kingdom (45%, +10%).

In terms of confidence in the European Union, almost half of respondents tend to trust (47%), while almost 46% of them tend to not trust the European institutions.

Q44.1 I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it.

The (NATIONALITY) Government (%)

		Tend to trust	Apr. 2017 - Aut. 2016	Tend not to trust	Apr. 2017 - Aut. 2016	Don't know
EU28		40	▲ 9	56	▼ 8	4
EURO AREA		40	▲ 9	56	▼ 9	4
NON-EURO AREA		42	▲ 9	54	▼ 7	4
AT		60	▲ 20	37	▼ 17	3
NL		78	▲ 19	21	▼ 17	1
EE		55	▲ 18	35	▼ 17	10
SE		72	▲ 16	26	▼ 15	2
DK		60	▲ 14	35	▼ 15	5
DE		64	▲ 13	32	▼ 11	4
PT		52	▲ 13	44	▼ 13	4
IT		27	▲ 12	67	▼ 14	6
HU		46	▲ 11	50	▼ 11	4
UK		45	▲ 10	52	▼ 4	3
BG		31	▲ 9	56	▼ 14	13
PL		35	▲ 9	59	▼ 8	6
RO		38	▲ 9	57	▼ 9	5
CZ		36	▲ 8	61	▼ 9	3
FR		25	▲ 8	72	▼ 7	3
FI		66	▲ 8	31	▼ 9	3
LT		35	▲ 6	60	▼ 1	5
IE		45	▲ 5	49	▼ 7	6
BE		45	▲ 4	53	▼ 3	2
EL		13	▲ 4	86	▼ 4	1
LU		70	▲ 4	24	▼ 1	6
SK		36	▲ 4	60	▼ 2	4
CY		34	▲ 2	57	▼ 3	9
HR		26	=	72	▲ 1	2
MT		52	=	34	▼ 2	14
SI		17	=	80	=	3
ES		18	▼ 2	79	▲ 2	3
LV		27	▼ 5	69	▲ 7	4

Figure 12. Trust in the national Government 2017 vs 2016.

Source: Special Eurobarometer 461 - Designing Europe's future, April 2017

It can be noticed that confidence in the EU has gradually increased since autumn 2015. However, the autumn trend of 2016 is somewhat spectacular: an increase of 11 percentage points in the proportion of those who trust the European Union and a fall of eight points of the share of respondents who do not trust.

An explanation is provided in the Eurobarometer, according to which some of these large changes can be explained by a difference in the April 2017 survey question set compared to the previous standard Eurobarometer autumn 2016. The new questions could have put the respondents in a more positive framework when answering this question.

Given the April 2017 Eurobarometer, in 18 countries most of the respondents tend to trust the EU, with the largest proportion being in Malta (66%), Lithuania and the Netherlands (both 64%). Most respondents also trust the European Union in Luxembourg (60%), Finland (60%), Bulgaria (59%),

Romania (59%), Poland (57%), Germany (57%), Denmark (56%), Sweden (56%), Estonia (54%), Hungary (52%), Belgium (52%), Portugal (51%), Slovakia (51%) and Latvia (47%).

In contrast, respondents in Greece (27%), Slovenia (32%), the Czech Republic and Spain (both 35%) are the least likely to say they tend to trust the EU. Minorities trust the EU in Cyprus (36%), Italy (39%), the United Kingdom (40%), France (40%), Croatia (43%) and Austria (44%).

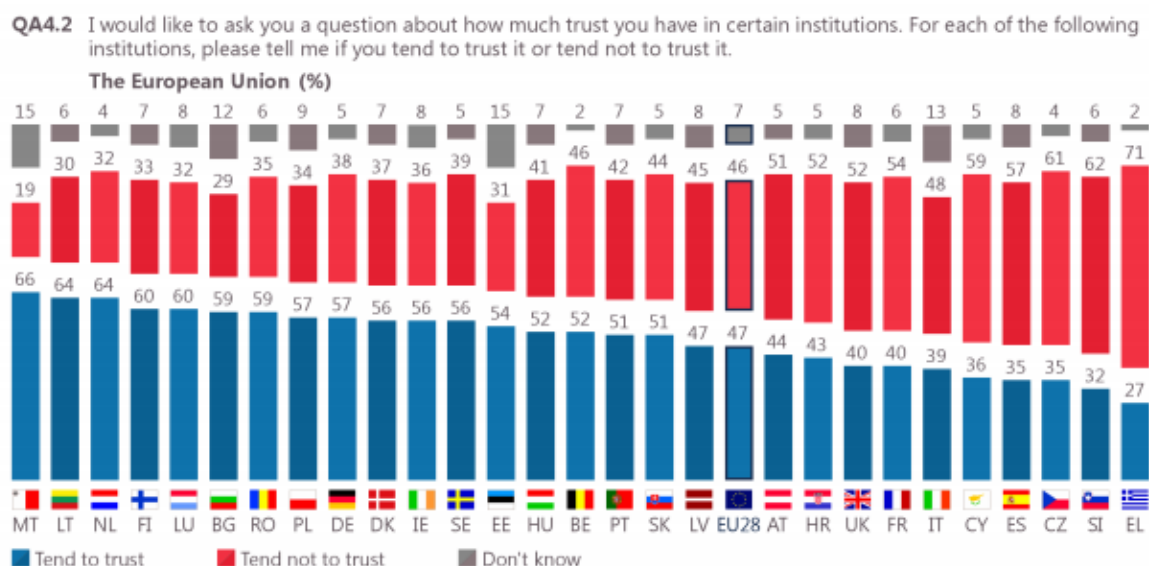


Figure 13. Trust in the European Union

Source: Special Eurobarometer 461 - Designing Europe's future, April 2017

Respondents from 26 countries show that they are inclined to trust the EU towards the autumn of 2016. The highest increases are in the Netherlands (64%, +22 percentage points), Germany (57%, +20 pp), Malta (66%, +14 pp), France (40%, +14 pp), Sweden (56%, +13 pp), Estonia (54%, +10 pp), Hungary (52%, +10 pp) and Bulgaria (59%, +10 pp). Trust has fallen in Slovenia and has remained stable in Croatia.

Q4.2 I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it.

The European Union (%)






























		Tend to trust	Apr. 2017 - Aut. 2016	Tend not to trust	Apr. 2017 - Aut. 2016	Don't know
EU28		47	▲ 11	46	▼ 8	7
EURO AREA		46	▲ 12	47	▼ 9	7
NON-EURO AREA		49	▲ 10	44	▼ 6	7
NL		64	▲ 22	32	▼ 19	4
DE		57	▲ 20	38	▼ 15	5
FR		40	▲ 14	54	▼ 11	6
MT		66	▲ 14	19	▼ 9	15
SE		56	▲ 13	39	▼ 9	5
PL		57	▲ 12	34	▼ 8	9
DK		56	▲ 11	37	▼ 9	7
BG		59	▲ 10	29	▼ 5	12
EE		54	▲ 10	31	▼ 5	15
HU		52	▲ 10	41	▼ 9	7
IT		39	▲ 9	48	▼ 10	13
LT		64	▲ 9	30	▲ 1	6
LU		60	▲ 9	32	▼ 9	8
AT		44	▲ 9	51	▼ 7	5
SK		51	▲ 9	44	▼ 3	5
FI		60	▲ 9	33	▼ 10	7
UK		40	▲ 9	52	▼ 4	8
CY		36	▲ 8	59	▼ 4	5
IE		56	▲ 7	36	▼ 6	8
EL		27	▲ 7	71	▼ 7	2
RO		59	▲ 7	35	▼ 6	6
CZ		35	▲ 6	61	▼ 5	4
BE		52	▲ 4	46	▼ 3	2
PT		51	▲ 3	42	=	7
LV		47	▲ 2	45	▲ 5	8
ES		35	▲ 1	57	▲ 3	8
HR		43	=	52	▲ 2	5
SI		32	▼ 5	62	▲ 5	6

Figure 14. Trust in the European Union 2017 vs 2016.

Source: Special Eurobarometer 461 - Designing Europe's future, April 2017

Conclusions on Trust in National Governments and the European Union

Eurobarometer data is collected in a context where the future of the European Union is being discussed, about crucial decisions that could reconfigure the whole of the Union. Analyzing the speech of the leaders of the Member States, they are more inclined to promote national interest, given the 2016 statistical data, when confidence in national governments and the European Union was about ten percentage points lower than in April 2017.

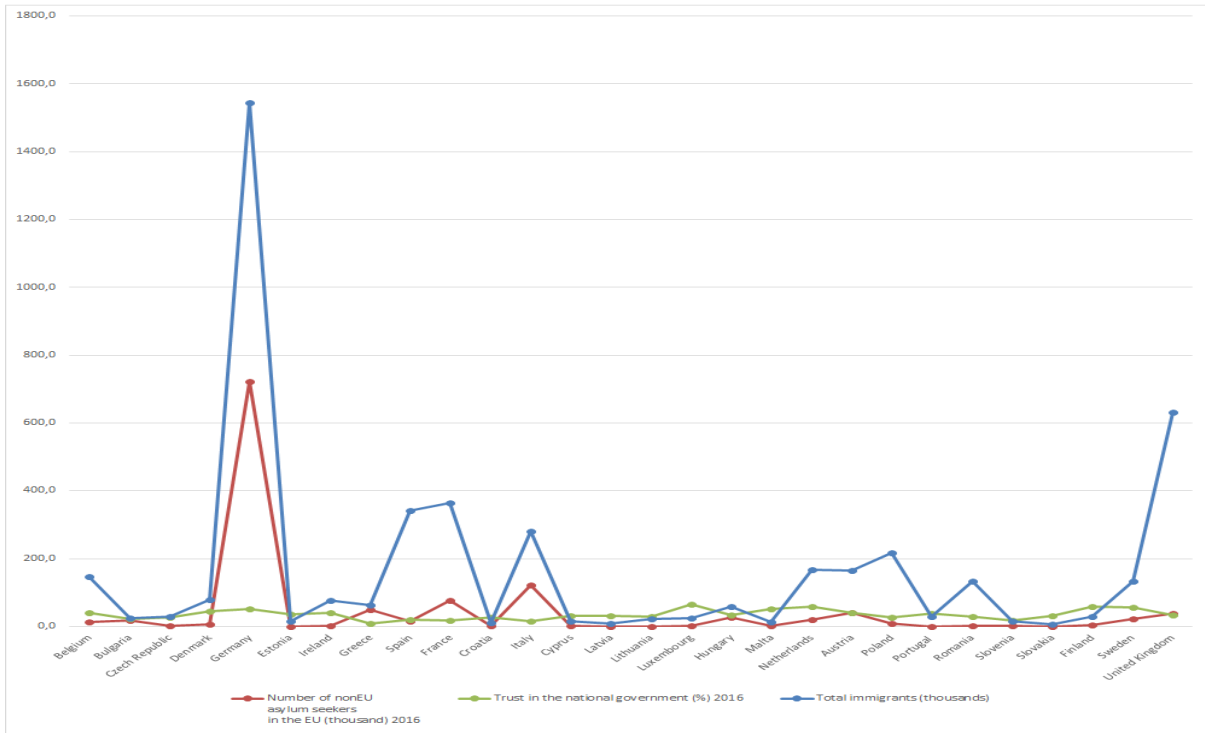


Figure 15. Number of non-EU asylum seekers in the EU 2016 vs Trust in national government vs Total immigrants.

Source: Eurostat and Eurobarometer

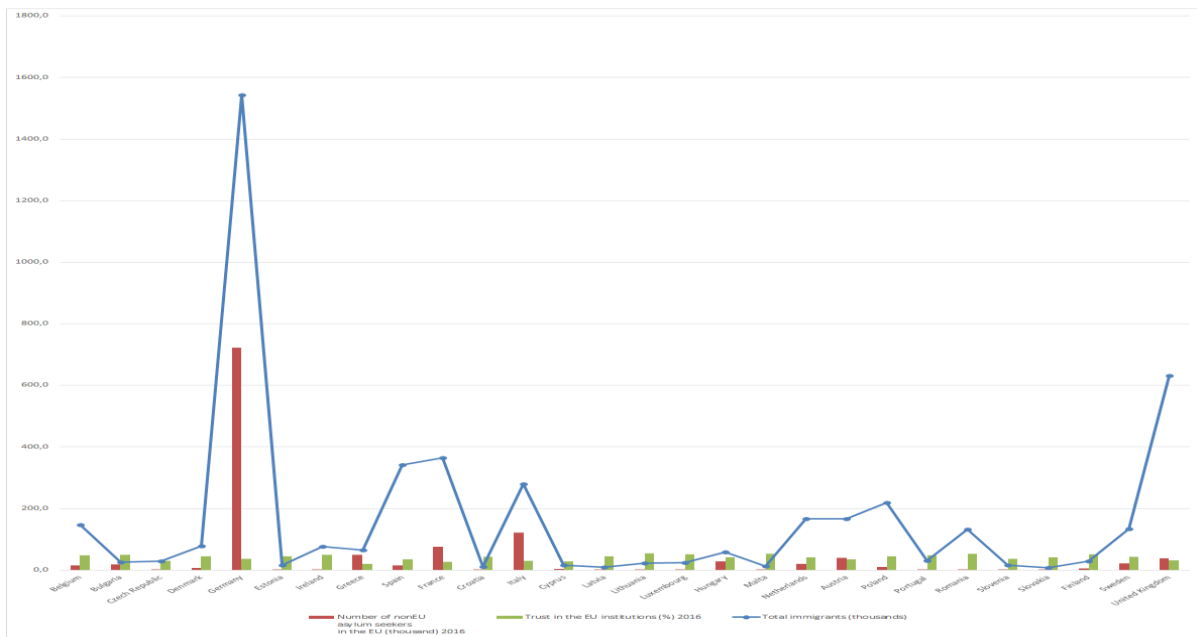


Figure 16. Number of non-EU asylum seekers in the EU 2016 vs Trust in EU vs Total immigrants.

Source: Eurostat and Eurobarometer

At the same time, data on confidence in national institutions and in the European Union has been gathered after terrorist attacks that have taken place in member states, as well as geopolitical uncertainties, especially regarding the terrorist threat, relations with Turkey and Russia.

Looking at the figures for confidence in their own governments and in the European Union in the autumn 2016 Eurobarometer, it was clear that in the Member States, officials in leadership positions had to guide their decisions according to citizens' attitudes if they wanted to remain in place or to win elections. At the same time, mistrust had to be transformed into trust by decisions taken to satisfy citizens.

The political context in which the Member States are located must not be overlooked. In the last year, elections took place in Austria, the Netherlands, France and will take place in Germany. Therefore, the influence of the electoral factor can not be neglected as part of building decisions on the position adopted by a state within the European Union.

Analyzing the Positions of the European Union Member States with a view to Determining the Future of the European construction

The position of each individual state in the European Union in the context of discussions on the future of the Union has been clearly established since the beginning of 2017. In the first months of the year, the EU Member States made public their position on how European construction should look like in the future.

The research analyses the position of the Member States by grouping them according to the way they conducted the negotiations and the common interests they expressed in the first part of 2017. At the same time, the analysis also included the states that had a public point of view.

A) The group of four founders - Germany, France, Italy and Spain

In March 2017, there was a meeting of the leaders of the four states, Germany, France, Italy and Spain, which did not include anything special or surprising on the agenda. Leaders in the four states seemed to focus more on communicating a common answer to the White Paper issued by European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, which presents five potential scenarios for the future of the EU¹.

The common response of these states was a clear preference for the third scenario, the so-called Europe with more speeds. This option calls for better cooperation and integration to the extent that each country is prepared for it in areas such as defense, security, taxation and social policies.

The meeting was, in essence, a show of unity before the upcoming summits.

B) Benelux Group - Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg

Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, a group of founding members of the EU, issued a statement in support of a two-speed European Union. The Benelux vision on the future of Europe was expressed in a document that the three states made public in March 2017. According to the Benelux states, "different approaches to enhanced integration and cooperation could provide effective responses to the challenges that affect Member States in different ways. These agreements should be integrated and transparent, with the greatest possible involvement of the other Member States and the institutions of the European Union."²

The Benelux countries suggest a two-speed Europe, allowing countries seeking further integration to continue, and the most reluctant to be left behind.

¹ Politico.eu: In Versailles, EU's big 4 back multispeed Europe, March 6th 2017 <http://www.politico.eu/article/in-versailles-eu-big-4-back-multi-speed-europe-italy-france-germany-spain/>

² Michel, Charles, 'Benelux vision on the future of Europe', February 3rd, 2017, <http://premier.fgov.be/en/benelux-vision-future-europe>

C) Visegrad Group - Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia

Visegrad group countries have refused to take asylum seekers and migrants despite EU solidarity demands.

Jarosław Kaczyński, on February 8, warned that any move to a two-speed European Union would break the Union. Jarosław Kaczyński told the Polish media that a so-called two-speed Europe would lead to the “breakdown and, in fact, the liquidation of the European Union in its current sense.”¹

In turn, Slovak President Andrej Kiska said that it is first necessary to clarify and define exactly what the hard nucleus in the European Union is and what Europe with more speed means².

D) Group of Nordic States - Sweden and Denmark

According to a study by VoteWatch.eu, Nordic members of the European Union, including Sweden, Denmark and Finland, would like to maintain the current status quo of the European bloc. “Finally, the Nordic countries, like Sweden and Denmark, are attentive to both perspectives (Europe with more speeds and a security-oriented Europe) and seem more willing to remain in the status quo.”³

At the same time, as stated in a Swedish Government document, their perspective on the future of the European Union is as follows: they want to be an active member of the EU, even if they are outside the euro area; Internal market regulations are a priority for Sweden; Common concerns should be discussed and taken into account by all 28 Member States; New initiatives should be open to all 28 Member States as much as possible⁴. Thus Sweden's position is extremely clear, namely against a Europe with more speeds.

E) Baltic States - Finland, Estonia

The European Union should not be divided into groups of states that step up their cooperation at different speeds, is the position of Finnish Prime Minister Juha Sipilä. He believes that “the formation of different political levels” would not be in Finland's interest⁵.

Also, Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid and Finland's President Sauli Niinistö said after a joint meeting that the EU already has multiple speeds because not all countries are participating in all forms of cooperation. What they have pointed out is that the various forms of cooperation should remain open to all Member States⁶.

F) Group of Balkan states - Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece

¹ Euractiv: Poland's Kaczynski warns two-speed Europe leads to 'breakdown', February 9th, 2017 <https://www.euractiv.com/section/future-eu/news/polands-kaczynski-warns-two-speed-europe-leads-to-breakdown/>

² The Slovak Spectator: President: Slovakia wants to stay at the core of the EU, April 27, 2017, <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/20518757/president-slovakia-wants-to-stay-at-the-core-of-the-eu.html>

³ Express UK: EUROPE DIVIDED: The damning maps which show how EU nations can't agree on euro and defence, March 8, 2017 <http://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/776509/European-Union-EU-divided-key-issues-eurozone-defence>

⁴ Ministry of Finance Sweden, Two-Speed Europe?, 12 November 2015 http://www.regeringen.se/globalassets/regeringen/dokument/finansdepartementet/pdf/1_magdalena_andersson.pdf

⁵ Reuters: Finnish PM warns against multi-speed EU, March 3rd, 2017 <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-eu-future-finland-idUSKBN16A1QA>

⁶ The Baltic Course: Estonian and Finnish presidents: EU can be multi-speed, March 7, 2017 http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/baltic_states/?doc=128105

After France and Germany voiced their support for a two-speed European Union, officials in Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia said they wanted more integration and common policies, feared they could be marginalized¹.

G) *Austria*. Austrian President Alexander van der Bellen said he is against setting up a multi-speed EU because “the one in front does not hear the one behind him, but if we go alongside each other, we can communicate and do an exchange of views “².

H) *Portugal*. Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa had a very vague position on the position of the country he is leading, but he lets the public think that he is in favor of the decision that the euro area countries will make. The Portuguese official believes that in any scenario, Portugal will be in the rough core³.

(I) *Cyprus*. Cypriot European deputies have shown caution in establishing a position for their country⁴.

Interpretation of the Positions Expressed by the Member States of the European Union in the Context of Europe's “Multi-Speed” Scenario

Crisis changes priorities and increases feelings of fear and pessimism. In other words, during a crisis, an increase in the importance of a problem is expected. In this case, we are talking about an increasing level of migration, which has led to an increase in a strong anti-European sentiment.

To identify this feeling we used the term concern, defining it as a feeling of concern over a political issue. Concern can be interpreted as a personal feeling of fear in a more contingent scenario.

Concern is the feeling that affects more deeply the support/opposition for the institutions. Foreign shocks bring a political issue to public attention, increasing the level of outreach. Both media and political actors have an influence on it, by increasing the level of attention and supporting various solutions for this issue. When the effects of shock begin to affect citizens' lives, a sense of anxiety grows with him. People not only find that the problem is important, but they also perceive it as a threat.

First of all, relevance and concern about the economic situation are positive. People begin to perceive the importance of the crisis and, after looking at its effects, to be concerned about the situation. Secondly, the concern for the economic situation is negative in relation to the specific support given to Europe. Thirdly, we can assume that the concern for the economy also affects diffuse support for Europe.

All kinds of support for the EU also come from attitudes towards the national government. This makes the European system more fragile than the national one, because the performance of national governments affects the legitimacy of the EU.

The European Union is not capable of creating a direct relationship with its citizens. Between the European citizens and the EU institutions is a huge gap, the citizens perceiving the leaders from Brussels as “far-fetched” (at least different from national models) and technocratic. They are not able to create an affiliation either with the government (not identifiable) or with the political parties in the European Parliament (elected on a national basis).

¹ Balkan Insight: Balkan EU States Reject a ‘Multi-Speed’ Union, march 2nd, 2017 <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/balkan-member-states-reject-a-multi-speed-eu-03-02-2017>

² The Slovak Spectator: President: Slovakia wants to stay at the core of the EU, April 27, 2017, <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/20518757/president-slovakia-wants-to-stay-at-the-core-of-the-eu.html>

³ The Portugal News: Idea of multi-speed EU 'not new'; Portugal in front line – President, March 10, 2017 <http://theportugalnews.com/news/idea-of-multi-speed-eu-not-new-portugal-in-front-line-president/41327>

⁴ Cyprus Mail: Cypriot MEPs cautious about a ‘multi-speed Europe’, April 9, 2017 <http://cyprus-mail.com/2017/04/09/cypriot-meeps-cautious-multi-speed-europe/>

Discussions that took place in the European space from the beginning of 2017 to the signing of the Rome Declaration have highlighted a scenario considered to be possible for the future of the European Union, that of Europe “with more speeds”. The analysis of the public discourse of the EU Member States leaders highlights three approaches to the future of the European bloc in the context of the “multi - speeds” scenario.

The three approaches that are highlighted are:

- A) States supporting Europe “with more speeds”;
- B) States that do not support Europe “with more speeds”;
- C) States still awaiting a decision on the future of the European Union.

From the media analysis of Europe's “multi-speed” scenario, it is noticed that since the beginning of 2017 a power pole has been created within the European Union concentrated around Germany and France, which has captured the interest of all public opinion and which decisions were also reported by the other Member States. The two founding states of the European community are also the main supporters of the idea of Europe “with more speeds”. A group of states that want a differentiated development within the European Union were built around the two countries. This group includes: Italy, Spain, Benelux. Practically, apart from Spain, the founding countries of the European Union promote the idea of a differentiated development and evolution.

On the other hand, countries such as Sweden, Austria, Poland, Greece, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Cyprus or Croatia are not in favor of such a vision regarding the future of the European Union. They want to continue to have the European Union as it exists today. Concerning the Visegrad and Balkan states, the motivation is clear, namely that they will remain on the periphery of the Union, making them the second-tier states. At the same time, the Visegrad group's speech is extremely sloppy about the future of the Union if the “multi-speed” scenario is applied, the leaders of these states claiming that a European disintegration and even collapse of the Union will occur.

Countries like Finland, Denmark, Portugal or Estonia are still waiting to shape a clear official position. These Member States want to see first what will be the final decision of the majority in the European Union. However, in the case of Finland and Estonia, the two countries tend to disagree with Europe “with more speeds”, while Portugal shows security in the public space regarding the membership to a future core of the European Union.

The Rome Declaration of EU-27 leaders is a first victory for states that support the idea of a “multi-speed Europe”. In fact, analyzing the speech and political positioning of the leaders of the group of those in favor of this scenario, we conclude that Europe “with more speed” is rather a consolidation of the core of the European Union. The reason for such a scenario is given by issues related to border security, economic security and the possibility of creating a buffer zone between the core and possible threats coming from outside.

Concluding, we note that the states that are more affected by the 2015-2016 migration try to promote the idea of a Union with more speeds to prevent such situations. On the other hand, European states with a high economic level and with a significant contribution to the Union budget but not affected by a large number of immigrants such as Germany, Italy, France or Benelux, call for a more pragmatic approach to the future of the Union European. This is particularly the case of Sweden, Finland, Denmark.

At the same time, the fact that countries that have suffered significantly as a result of the 2015-2016 migration are against a vision of Europe's divide can be explained by the benefits currently flowing from the membership to the European Union. In this case we are talking about Austria and Hungary.

Favorable positioning for a scenario in which the European Union has more speeds should also be interpreted in the light of the pressure exerted over the past two years by eurosceptics and nationalists in the Member States of the European Union, such as France, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy or Spain. It is not to be neglected that the eurosceptic and nationalist parties recorded an increase between 2015 and 2017. Thus, the French elections could have been won by a Eurosceptic presidentialist in the person of Marine Le Pen, while in the Netherlands the parliamentary elections could have brought to power PVV led by Geert Wilders. The two defeats of Eurosceptics can be interpreted as consequences of national and European decisions taken by the states concerned.

Which are the preferences behind decisions on the European Union - those of voters or those of political parties?

Political parties respond to the state of the public about European integration and this makes the decision in some areas have a number of constraints on the part of the citizens.

Political parties have a broad audience. Stefano Bartolini argued and showed empirically that the structure of party competition is both strong and strong in shaping party positioning.

In the first decades of European integration, Euroscepticism had its roots in opposition to market integration. Since the Treaty of the Masstricht, he has taken an extra dimension: the defense of the national community. Changing the character of European integration can also affect the different national context.

Analysis of party/voter engagement and party positioning are interdependent.

Simon Hix argues that euroscepticism is best designed as a rational answer by citizens (and parties) for whom centralized EU power is a threat to their interests - not as a profound dissident in the political system.

The level of mistrust in the European Union and in national governments shows that in the Member States of the European Union, the immigration crisis, along with its consequences, including the Brexit, has created a high degree of mistrust and insecurity among citizens. The functioning of European bodies and their ability to make the right decisions on the future of the European Union.

We can therefore assume that the low level of trust along with the political and electoral context in some states, including the Netherlands, France, Germany, has led national governments to make decisions that satisfy the national interest, leaving behind the general interest of the European Union.

The Eurobarometer data released in April 2017 is presented to the public in a political context in which waters have been separated on the future of European construction. Thus, we see spectacular increases in confidence in the European Union and in national governments in states that have firmly positioned themselves in line with public opinion sentiment.

The confidence is building in the European Union in 2017 as compared to 2016 in Germany and France, the two countries that have intensively promoted the idea of a Europe with more speeds and the creation of a core around them. In countries such as Belgium, Luxembourg, the level of confidence in the European Union has exceeded 50%, and in Italy, which suffered from migration and went through a referendum proposed by Matteo Renzi to amend the Constitution, has increased by 9%. All three states have declared themselves in favor of the idea of Europe with more speeds.

On the other hand, we see how, in states that have declared themselves favorable to the European Union with more speeds, confidence in national governments has increased significantly. In the Netherlands, the government has reached a confidence level of 78%, 19% more than in 2016, being an obvious sign that the citizens responded to the actions and decisions taken by the government. Also, the confidence in the national government grew in Germany to 64%, and in France, a state where the socialist government had to suffer tough criticism over the last few years, confidence in the national Executive began to recover, in April 2017 to 25%, but it should be made clear that the measures took place before Emmanuel Macron was elected president. In Luxembourg, confidence in the national government stood at 70%, while in Belgium this confidence stood at 45%. Italy, a state misted by the political turmoil and affected by the waves of immigrants, has seen an increase in confidence in the national government of 12%.

At the same time, states that have not favored the idea of Europe with more speeds and have positioned for the continuation of the European Union as it is today have also undergone significant changes in confidence in the European Union and in governments national. The European Union has been seen, by many of the states outside the core of the founding states, as the only solution for development and cooperation, their positioning being easy to understand in the continuation of European construction as it is today. The decision of the officials from the Center, but also the Eastern and Southern Europe, to resist the will of the Western European states was an agreed one by the citizens, also based on the values of the Eurobarometer. Increased favorability towards national governments was registered in Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Poland. Also, Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary and Austria are among the countries where confidence in European institutions has increased significantly.

Concluding, the declaration signed by European leaders in Rome is nothing more than an imposition of power by the clustered countries around Germany and France against those states who wanted the continuation of the Union as it is today. The pressure from citizens' interests, the possibility of a wave of euroscepticism and nationalist discourse, led the leaders of the Western European states to take the decision made in the Rome declaration.

Bibliography

Belot, C.; Cautrès, B. & Strudel, S. (2013). L'Europe comme enjeu clivant/ Europe as a key issue. *Revue française de science politique/ French Political Science Journal*, 63(6).

Blot, C.; Rozenberg, O.; Saraceno, F. & Strehö, I. (2014). Réformer l'Europe?/Reforming Europe? *Revue de l'OFCE, Débats et politiques/ OFCE Review, Debates and Policies*, No. 134.

Burgess, Michael (2000). *Federalism and the European Union: The Building of Europe, 1950-2000*. London: Routledge.

Eichenberg, R.C. & Dalton, R.J. (2007). Post-Maastricht Blues: The Transformation of Citizen Support for European Integration, 1973-2004. *Acta Politica*, vol. 42, n° 2-3.

Eichengreen, B. (2008). *Globalizing Capital: A History of the International Monetary System*, 2nd Edition. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Fischer, Joschka (2000). *From Confederacy to Federation - Thoughts on the finality of European integration*. Berlin: Humboldt University, May 12.

Hogge, L. & Marks, G. (2008). A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus. *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 39 Issue 01, January.

Key, O. Jr. (1961). *Public Opinion and American Democracy*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Koskenniemi, Martti & Stråth, Bo, (2014). *Europe 1815-1914: Creating Community and ordering the World*. Helsinki: University of Helsinki.

- Lagarde, C. (2012). *The Legacy of Charlemagne -- Wolfgang Schäuble and European Integration*. IMF, May 16.
- Lindberg, L.N. & Scheingold, S.A. (1970). *Europe's Would Be Polity. Patterns of Change in the European Community*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Loedel, Peter H. (1999). *Deutsche Mark Politics: Germany in the European Monetary System*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder
- Vasilopoulou, S. (2013). Continuity and Change in the Study of Euroscepticism. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 51, n°1.
- Balkan Insight: Balkan EU States Reject a 'Multi-Speed' Union, March 2nd, 2017 <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/balkan-member-states-reject-a-multi-speed-eu-03-02-2017>.
- Cyprus Mail: Cypriot MEPs cautious about a 'multi-speed Europe', April 9, 2017 <http://cyprus-mail.com/2017/04/09/cypriot-meps-cautious-multi-speed-europe/>.
- David Schneider-Addae-Mensah, The Current European Constitutional Debate in the Wake of the Fischer Speech, <http://www.simons-law.com/library/pdf/e/27.pdf>.
- DW: What does a multi-speed EU mean for central and eastern Europe?, <http://www.dw.com/en/what-does-a-multi-speed-eu-mean-for-central-and-eastern-europe/a-38016484>.
- Euractiv: Poland's Kaczynski warns two-speed Europe leads to 'breakdown', February 9th, 2017 <https://www.euractiv.com/section/future-eu/news/polands-kaczynski-warns-two-speed-europe-leads-to-breakdown/>.
- Express UK: EUROPE DIVIDED: The damning maps which show how EU nations can't agree on euro and defence, March 8, 2017 <http://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/776509/European-Union-EU-divided-key-issues-eurozone-defence>
- Financial Times: A multi-speed formula will shape Europe's future, <https://www.ft.com/content/f01f1266-058e-11e7-ace0-1ce02ef0def9>.
- Financial Times: Moving to a multi-speed Europe, <https://www.ft.com/content/01573ae6-f378-11e6-95ee-f14e55513608>.
- Juristische Fakultät Walter Hallstein-Institut <https://plone.rewi.hu-berlin.de/de/lf/oe/whi/FCE/2000>.
- Lamers, K. and W. Schäuble (2014), "More Integration Is Still the Right Goal for Europe," *Financial Times*, August 31 <https://www.ft.com/content/5565f134-2d48-11e4-8105-00144feabdc0?mhq5j=e2>.
- Michel, Charles, 'Benelux vision on the future of Europe', February 3rd, 2017, <http://premier.fgov.be/en/benelux-vision-future-europe>.
- Ministry of Finance Sweden, Two-Speed Europe?, 12 November 2015 http://www.regeringen.se/globalassets/regeringen/dokument/finansdepartementet/pdf/1_magdalena_andersson.pdf.
- Politico.eu: In Versailles, EU's big 4 back multispeed Europe, March 6th 2017 <http://www.politico.eu/article/in-versailles-eus-big-4-back-multi-speed-europe-italy-france-germany-spain/>.
- Reuters: Finnish PM warns against multi-speed EU, March 3rd, 2017 <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-eu-future-finland-idUSKBN16A1QA>.
- The Baltic Course: Estonian and Finnish presidents: EU can be multi-speed, March 7, 2017 http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/baltic_states/?doc=128105.
- The Economist: Europe's future is multi-speed and multi-tier, <https://www.economist.com/news/special-report/21719193-eu-must-embrace-greater-differentiation-or-face-potential-disintegration-europes>.
- The Portugal News: Idea of multi-speed EU 'not new'; Portugal in front line – President, March 10, 2017 <http://theportugalnews.com/news/idea-of-multi-speed-eu-not-new-portugal-in-front-line-president/41327>.
- The Slovak Spectator: President: Slovakia wants to stay at the core of the EU, April 27, 2017, <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/20518757/president-slovakia-wants-to-stay-at-the-core-of-the-eu.html>.
- The Slovak Spectator: President: Slovakia wants to stay at the core of the EU, April 27, 2017, <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/20518757/president-slovakia-wants-to-stay-at-the-core-of-the-eu.html>.

Statistical data

European Commission, 'Special Eurobarometer 461 - Designing Europe's future', April 2017
<http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/SPECIAL/surveyKy/2173>

Eurostat, European Economic Forecast Spring 2017, May, 2017 https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/ip053_en.pdf.

Eurostat, Migration and migrant population statistics, March 2017, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics.

Pew Research Center, July, 2016, "Europeans Fear Wave of Refugees Will Mean More Terrorism, Fewer Jobs"
<http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2016/07/Pew-Research-Center-EU-Refugees-and-National-Identity-Report-FINAL-July-11-2016.pdf>.

United Nations, International Migration Report 2015 – Highlights, New York, 2016
http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2015_Highlights.pdf.



THE 12TH EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

**Geopolitical Evolutions in the Eastern
Space in Romania's Proximity**

Florin Iftode¹

Abstract: We will debate some aspects related to the geopolitical equation of space in Romania's proximity where we have bigger actors (Russia), smaller actors (Republic of Moldova), as well as actors without international legitimacy (Transnistrian Republic). The geopolitical issue includes the analysis of the intersections between the Russian border and the Euro-Atlantic area, on the border line represented by the Republic of Moldova. The effect of the geopolitical tensions on the internal dynamics of R. of Moldova's policy, exclusively the dependence on the Nistru crisis and the geopolitical and security blockage, is represented by the "frozen conflict" in Transnistria. We will show with arguments why the states in the Black Sea - Caucasus - Central Asia region have a double hypostasis: seen from Brussels, they are part of the eastern neighborhood of the EU, but seen from the Kremlin, they are part of the "close neighborhood" of Russia. Therefore, each of these states resembles the pieces on the chessboard waiting to be moved. In conclusion, the problems that the area raises are countless - interethnic conflicts, a mosaic of religions, frozen conflicts, instability, the presence of non-democratic institutions, collapse of states, economic backwardness, authoritarian regimes. Of the above list, no feature has positive features, which is an alarm signal.

Keywords: geopolitics; the proximity of Romania; Transnistrian Republic; frozen conflict

1. Introduction

The lack of natural boundaries has fueled a national obsession in Russia about the need to control territories as a cover against invasions. Historian G. Patrick March said that the vulnerability of the Russian territory gave rise to a "higher tolerance for tyranny" (March, 1996, p. 73). We believe that this finding could help to understand some of President Putin's tough political decisions.

The western media loves to hate him, because he does not fit the templates - a sort of liberal leader who receives cheering in chic conferences. What the media should see in Putin is not really the totalitarian authoritarian, but only a Russian, ordinary semi-dictator whose cynical neo-imperialism is the result of deep, very deep geographic insecurity.

Putin wants a dominant influence in the Baltic states. He wants state buffers in Eastern Europe. He does not accept the collapse of the Warsaw Treaty. He knows he cannot reconstruct that treaty, he knows he

¹ Associate Professor, PhD, Danubius University of Galati, Faculty of Communication and International Relations, Romania. Address: 3 Galati Blvd, Galati, Romania, Tel.: +40372 361 102, Fax: +40372 361 290, Corresponding author: floriniftode@univ-danubius.ro.

cannot take back the Baltic states because they are NATO members. But he will try. He will continue to press in various ways, through gas pipelines, organized crime, cyber attacks etc.

The same situation explains his need for buffer states in Belarus and Ukraine. For the same reasons, he invaded Georgia in 2008; he exerts a significant influence in Central Asia, even if he does not have the military capacity to reconstruct the Russian empire there. Putin thinks as a traditional Russian leader, because Russia is open to invasions almost on all sides. Russia is a great land-based power without natural barriers, and terrestrial powers are particularly vulnerable and insecure. They lack the security of ocean-protected marine powers.

It is very likely that Russia will not succeed in overcoming all the “holes” in its frontier protection system. It will have to consider priorities to preserve its right to state life. And the first is Ukraine. Ukraine occupies the most productive part of the Russian cereal area - the southernmost area, where it rains regularly. As the Russian capital and labor shortages accumulate, maintaining control over high productivity and low-spending land will gain increasing importance. Together with the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine controls the Bessarabian pass (low area between the Black Sea and the Carpathians). By controlling this passage, Russia will limit Turkey's ability to threaten the Russian central territories.

Ukraine holds the largest population of ethnic Russians outside the Russian Federation. Their numerical inclusion in the Russian system would improve and postpone the demographic twilight for a few years. The industrial base of Eastern Ukraine is located in the immediate vicinity of Russia. Combining them would help all parts of the Russian economy take some time. Ukrainian infrastructure transports almost half of Russian oil and gas to Europe, so Ukraine is a special economic value. The only truly navigable river in the former Soviet Union is the Dnieper, flows to the south, and allows Ukraine to integrate economically with the Black Sea, the Marmara Sea and the rest of the world. Crimean Peninsula controls the mouths of the Dnieper and is the seat of the only Russian naval base that do not freeze - Sevastopol. As long as Crimea and Sevastopol are in the hands of Russia, Ukraine cannot reach a real economic development, and foreign naval powers - the most important, Turkey - cannot dominate the Black Sea. Russia's efforts to re-anchorage began in the Crimea in 2014. But they will not stop there. Under any circumstances, a completely independent Ukraine would be a challenge for Russia.¹

2. Frozen Conflict in Transnistria

The cold war covered the planet more completely than the other wars of the XXth century. The specifics of the period 1945 and 1990 were given by tensions between two superpowers recognized as protagonists of the Cold War: the US and the Soviet Union. The end of the Cold War “*is marked by the collapse of the Berlin Wall (1991). Although for the historians marks the end of a short XXth century begun in 1914, the end of the Cold War does not also mean the disappearance of the privileged relations between the US and the USSR, then Russia: the fallout situation and the nuclear arsenal of Russia and Ukraine make them a partner to be spared. American diplomacy, on the other hand, sees itself widowed by its Cold War ideology. Some, like Senator Paul Tsongas, even state, in the context of the economic crisis and the debate about the American decline that “the Cold War ended with the victory of Japan”. This strange end, unique in history, has the gift of provoking debates; and if the Cold War is over, for historians it is just beginning, with the gradual opening of archives in the East.*”²

¹ Constantin Crănganu, *Russia - The Closeness of Twilight (geopolitical)*, According to - <http://www.contributors.ro/global-europa/rusia-aproprierea-amurgului-geopolitic/>.

² International Relations Dictionary - XX Century, Volume coordinated by (Vaisse, 2008, p. 291).

From a geopolitical point of view, the present Republic of Moldova appears as a Romanian outpost in the Slavic world, a Romanian-speaking territory whose language was “moldavized” and transcribed in Cyrillic letters according to the needs of the Soviet power, until 1989. As a testimony to its very tumultuous history during the XIX-XX centuries, the society of the Republic of Moldova could have a special charm through its borderline character between Latin and Slavism. The demographic data converge to the same idea: in 1989, at the time of its re-emergence, the Republic of Moldova was the common home of a population of 4,335,360 inhabitants, of which 2.8 million Romanians/Moldovans, 600,000 Ukrainians, 525,000 Russians, 150,000 Gagauz, 70,000 Bulgarians and 65,000 Jews. Known more as a garden of the former USSR, an appreciated provider of vegetables, fruits, tobacco and wine, the Republic of Moldova has not excelled in industrialization during the Soviet power; even so, most of its industrial potential lies in the Transnistrian region - a strip of about 5 000 km² located on the left bank of the Dniester, at the border between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, with a population (in the same reference year 1989) of about 800 000 inhabitants, out of which over two thirds of Russian speakers (mainly Russians and Ukrainians). To keep in mind a historical detail about Transnistria: it was, in a way, the core of the future entity since 1924 when Stalin, for purely political reasons and without any historical basis, created here the Moldavian Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic (as part of the Ukrainian RSFS) - for the simple reason that it could claim that the Moldavia itself (meaning Historical Bessarabia), located in Romania's borders after the Great War, would be under the “yoke of the occupation” of Romania (between 1918 and 1940, and then in conditions of “Romanian occupation” between 1941 and 1944).

After the creation of the Moldavian RSFS and after years of intense repression of the Russian-speaking elite - it remains unforgettable the deportation of 11239 families of Romanians, comprising 30050 people to Siberia, on the night of 5 to 6 July 1949, and totally subject to a monopolized political leadership by the Russian-speaking natives, over the nearly 50 years of Soviet history (Igor, 1991), The RSFS of Moldavia seemed to be a relatively easily manageable republic. It is probably not a coincidence that passed through here, in their first part of their political career Leonid Brejnev (first secretary of the PC Moldovans in 1950-1952) and one of his protectors at that time and later his successor, Konstantin Cernenko (secretary of agitation and propaganda in the Moldavian RSFS in 1948-1956). These totally parallel legends about the recent Romanian past of the Republic of Moldova were still to persist and still recoverable today. Probably, as an author says (Cioroianu, 2009, p. 252): “*if the Romanian state had more time, it is very possible to have succeeded in transforming the Basarabians into Romanians*”, but “*in the short period between the two world wars, (...) homogenization efforts of the Romanian state failed to convert the pre-modern, regional identity of basarabians in a modern, national one. That is why the Soviet project to build the Moldovan nation found favorable conditions in Bessarabia*”, with the mandatory mention that, according to the same interpretations, “*to the success of this project, but also contributed substantially the frustrating experience of Basarabians during the period when they were part of the Great Romania*”¹. Area with vineyard, fruit-growing, horticultural, apicultural area a.s. enviable potential, the Moldavian RSFS remained until recently a profoundly rural one. In 1944 and 1959, it had the lowest level of urbanization in the USSR (18 and 22 percent of the population lived in cities); in 1989 only, the percentage of the urban population will reach 47 percent.

As in other republics of the Soviet Union - and in any case, as in those in which independence was obtained by fighting or at the cost of frozen conflicts - also in the Republic of Moldova it became very clear that it is impossible to find that (state) identity to please all citizens, as historian Adrian Cioroianu

¹ Cristina Petrescu, Construction of National Identity in Bessarabia, în (Heintz, 2007, p. 143).

states¹. Not so the Russian-speaking population in the area, as Russia (through this population) reacted immediately to the possibility (rather theoretical, at that time) that the Republic of Moldova would go to Romania; and a scenario that was to be repeated throughout the former Soviet Union was put into practice.

In an article entitled *Transnistrian Conflict: Geopolitics and Geostrategy*, Oleg Serebrian, speaking of Transnistria, says that „Moldovans had a permanent presence in the country? The colonization of the Dniester's left began especially since the XVIIIth century, although migratory waves existed in the XVIIIth century. XV, but especially in the XVIth century. However, due to the fact that the Russians and the Ukrainians have not made their massive presence in the region until after 1792, it cannot be said that Moldovans would have fewer rights on the given land than the Ukrainians.”² Usually, Russian and Ukrainian historiography refers to the Slavic presence in the Bugo-Nistrian interfluvial space during IX-XII centuries. “The possibility of this presence cannot in any way be denied or the slave migration campaigns of the previous centuries, as well as the limits of the maximum extension of Kyiv Russia. But there is no evidence that the Transnistrian territory was thoroughly controlled by the Slavs and, moreover, there are no significant vestiges of the Slavic material culture of the period”.³ The same article shows that Transnistria was not a Moldovan political territory. Transnistrian Moldovans are the natives who, after 1792, had a regime of occupation and national pressure from the Russian Empire. The same author shows that the Romanianness of Transnistria was challenged even in Romania. “When Marshal Antonescu ordered the passage of Romanian troops across the Dniester there were several voices reserved for this gesture. This was also the case in Chisinau in 1992, when a murmur of dissatisfaction about the losses suffered sneaked in order to maintain in the Republic of Moldova a foreign territory to the country's body”.⁴ In order to be as correct as possible in expressing Oleg Serebrian's point of view, we will continue to reproduce the extract from the article quoted below, which shows that, “in fact, those who recognized the Moldovan (Romanian) character of the Transnistrian region were indeed the Soviets when they created the Moldovan Autonomous Republic in 1924. Even if the purpose was a territorial rebellion in Bessarabia and beyond the Prut, the constitution of the Moldavian autonomy in the left bank of the Dniester set the beginning of Moldovan political-geographic presence in Transnistria. In August 1940, with the transformation of the Moldovan Autonomous Republic into the union republic, five of the eleven Moldovan Transdnistriean districts were attached to Ukraine- Kodima, Balta, Kotovsk, Red Salt Mines and Ananiev. Din pacate, foarte adesea uitam ca Basarabia a pierdut în august 1940 nu doar patru raioane la nord și 9 raioane la sud, ci și aceasta parte a Transnistriei, în care mai locuiesc zeci de mii de moldoveni transnistreni.”⁵

With a population of about 550,000 people and a territory of 4,163 km², the Transnistrian region has evolved since the proclamation of “independence” in 1991 and to date in a de facto state entity not controlled by the Moldovan central authorities⁶. The attempts of political settlement of the conflict in Transnistria have achieved poor results. The political negotiations involving Transnistrian and Moldovan parties, as well as representatives from the OSCE, Ukraine and Russia failed to identify a solution regarding the status of the region. This is why the Moldovan authorities have attempted to

¹Adrian Cioroianu – is a PhD in History at the University of Laval (Quebec-Canada) and the University of Bucharest. He is specialized in the contemporary history of Romania, and in October 2008 inaugurated at the Faculty of History of the University of Bucharest a Masters course dedicated to the history of post-Soviet Russia.

² <http://transnistria.md/ro/articles/0/542/>.

³ <http://transnistria.md/ro/articles/0/542/>.

⁴ <http://transnistria.md/ro/articles/0/542/>.

⁵ <http://transnistria.md/ro/articles/0/542/>.

⁶ *EU Action Plan - Republic of Moldova*, ADEPT Guide, Gunivas Publishing House, Chisinau, 2006, p. 61.

internationalize regulatory efforts by involving, since 2005, the US and the EU in the negotiating mechanism as observers.

Why is Russia interested in keeping control of this enclave and why many Russian parliamentarians and officials see Transnistria¹ as a “*region of privileged interest*” for Russia? The answer is an elementary strategic consideration. Transnistria (located in the “coast” of Romania, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) alongside Kaliningrad² (the Russian enclave that no longer has a border with Russia, but it is also on the “coast” of Poland and Lithuania) and the Crimean peninsula pulled from the territory of Ukraine in 2014³, are all three parts of a security cord useful to Russia from a geopolitical point of view, especially since NATO has penetrated significantly in the East of the European continent. The alibi of the rebellion of the Russian-speakers in Transnistria was originally a linguistic one: the declaration by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova in 1990 of the Romanian language as an official language was rejected to the left of the Dniester in the most concrete way possible. Transnistria is the first to become a target in the war against terrorism, being a paradise for illegal smuggling of arms and smuggled goods and a pre-designed place of rest for mafia and terrorist groups. The business here is feeding the accounts of terrorists from all over the world.⁴

Referring to the origin of the Transnistrian conflict, Oleg Serebrian shows that “*if we remember the problems of 1988-89, when the conflict arose, we would notice a little nuance - we then opted not for ethnic, but linguistic identity, not for national independence, but for the revival of national culture. Ideas regarding the union with Romania, independence from the USSR, or anticommunist slogans were not very noticeable. Hence, neither ethnic nor political factors could have been the source of the conflict. The Transnistrian problem has originated more an intercultural conflict, which, after November 1989, became more and more pronounced from geopolitical point of view.*”⁵

The Transnistrian conflict represents „*only a geopolitical conflict, and the ideology or political regime in the present case has no importance. Besides, even Western observers do not hurry with such ratings. Speaking of the geopolitical and geostrategic value of the conflict, some political analysts in Chisinau attribute an exaggerated dimension to it, even if Transnistria is said to be a “Russian knife stuck in the back of Ukraine”, and when it is said that Transnistria would be a base of Russia for the Balkan “direction”. If we are talking about the Balkans and its “gates”, let us not forget that the old and metaphorical qualifier of Bessarabia as the “gate of the Balkans” was valid for Russia in its geographic configuration at that time.*”⁶

According to Oleg Serebrian “*the geopolitical value of Transnistria is one that states not the control of the Balkans nor the threat of Ukraine, but only the control of the Republic of Moldova. Paradoxically, the Republic of Moldova largely owes its existence to the Transnistrian problem, and this is not only that legally contemporary Moldovan statehood has its origin in Transnistria of 1924, but also because if this conflict did not exist, then the story of the independence of the Republic of Moldova, with its*

¹ Transnistria - surface about 5 000 km², population of about 800 000 inhabitants, mostly Russian-speakers. Enclave, which is part of the Russian Federation, is - geopolitically speaking - a point of control over the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine.

² Kaliningrad - the former capital (Königsberg) of Oriental Prussia, the city was a war trophy obtained by the USSR in 1945. After the collapse of the USSR, the city (about 415 000 inhabitants) and the surrounding region remained part of the Russian Federation - even if no boundaries with it. Geopolitically, Kaliningrad offers an exit to the Baltic Sea and control over the North of Poland and the West of Lithuania.

³ The right of residence of the Russian Federation's fleet in the port of Simferopol - Sevastopol, was prolonged until 2017 (s.n.).

⁴ Republic of Moldova - Anti-democratic Sinking of Galagious Government, Country Report 2003, Coordinator: Iulian Chifu, Politeea-Snsipa Publishing House, 2004, p. 261.

⁵ <http://transnistria.md/ro/articles/0/542/>.

⁶ <http://transnistria.md/ro/articles/0/542/>.

dominance in the Chisinau political elite in December 1991, would have ended with the fall of the Soviet flag in Kremlin and by the reunification of Bessarabia with Romania."¹

Speaking of the interest of US² and EU on Transnistria, in his work on the geopolitics of the Transnistrian conflict, Oleg Serebrian shows that „*Americans and Europeans rarely manifest glimpses of interest, but this is generated not by the conflict itself, but by the stockpiles of weapons and the paths that that weapon comes surprisingly through the most undesirable corners of the Earth.*”³

3. Points of View on the Transnistrian Issue

Ion Leahu⁴ analyzed the tensions between Chisinau and Tiraspol, as well as the “convenient” intervention of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) mission. At the same time, he also mentioned the contribution that Romania should have in the conflict between the Republic of Moldova and the self-proclaimed pro-Russian republic, the Nistrian Moldavian Republic (Transnistria).

He declared that *the JCC's (Joint Control Commission) activity does not in any way affect the basic aspirations of the Transnistrian region, such as the coveted sovereignty or control regime in the security zone completely dominated by the secessionist regime. At the same time, due to an informational tradition, the Commission's activity awakens a certain interest and can be interpreted as an indication of bilateral or multilateral relations in the negotiation process.* Major changes will not occur if Moscow is not interested.

Former member of the Moldovan delegation to the Joint Control Commission, Ion Leahu, said the representatives of Austria, holding the presidency in the OSCE for 2017, announced the availability to have no less than two meetings in the format “5+2”. *Berlin, when chairman of the OSCE, had the “Mezenberg process” in which it had something to propose to Moscow in exchange of boosting negotiations on the Transnistrian issue. Austria only has the protocol of June 2016 in Berlin. Tiraspol and Moscow, however, will not abandon the examination of this deeply erroneous document, a factor that may have been conditioned by the abdication of Vienna from the convening of the format “5+2”.* Starting from this finding, obviously, we cannot expect dynamism in the settlement of the conflict.

Regarding Moscow's position, the Moldovan expert shows that *this is limited by the financial factor, a factor that has greatly influenced how to react to changes in the region. Previously, Moscow could afford the delivery to Tiraspol \$ 100, 200 million a year to ensure its indisputable dedication to the population. Then these transactions became more and more difficult to bear for Russia, being aggravated by massive embezzlement by the former Transnistrian leader Igor Smirnov and his family. Russia cuts out of financial assistance.* Not long ago, Moscow encouraged Tiraspol to expedite the application of the Russian Federation's legislation in the Transnistrian territory. Obviously, the action is a response to Bucharest's evolutions in relation to the North Atlantic block and Chişinău with Brussels. At that time Tiraspol decided to habg the Russian tricolor at the same time as the red-green bicolor one, applied as its “own flag”.

¹ <http://transnistria.md/ro/articles/0/542/>.

² *The vast country, as the entire European continent, with a large exit to the two largest oceans of the planet (Pacific and Atlantic) and with huge ground and underground resources, the United States were predestined - as some American personalities have expressed, over time - to dominate the world. The events of the last decade of the XXth century propelled the United States into a singular world position, the world's only superpower.* cf. (Negrut, 2005, p. 109).

³ <http://transnistria.md/ro/articles/0/542/>.

⁴ Former member of the Moldovan delegation to the Joint Control Commission, an expert in Transnistrian settlement.

According to the experience of the Moldovan expert, Leahu said that *the involvement of the OSCE in the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict is not one that corresponds to the mandate of the mission and the capabilities of this international structure*. The OSCE mission practices a tactic, both comfy and inefficient, which could be exposed in the following way: *“The OSCE will support all the agreements reached by the parties involved in the conflict”*. Because of this passive position, the parties commit serious deviations, which condition the absence of positive effects. *The nonessential reaction of the OSCE to the serious deviations from the provisions of the basic acts, which regulates the peacekeeping operation in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova and the regulatory process supported by the Russian Federation and Transnistria, contributes to the complete depletion of these norms*.

As a result, the peacekeeping mission in the Republic of Moldova no longer has mechanisms to influence the situation, to ensure peace and stability. Annually, about 10 extremely serious situations (conflicts, altercations, murders (Vadim Pisari's case of January 1, 2011), involvement of force structures) are committed. They are caused by the inability of the OSCE Mission to demand unconditionally compliance with the prescribed rules. Basically, there has been no assessment of the crisis situations. I believe that the OSCE Mission has the obl to require permanent monitoring of compliance with legal rules for the implementation of the peace process, the settlement of the dispute and the adoption of decisions.

On Romania's contribution to solving the Transnistrian conflict, Ion Leahu said that *Romania in its current quality as an EU member state and North Atlantic block obviously is limited in actions. It promotes the policies developed and proposed by the designated bodies*.

As for the contribution made by civil society, the media, the possibilities are enormous in this respect. The problem, however, is the position of Chisinau. It is necessary for the Republic of Moldova to prepare a well-argued strategy of collaboration with the Romanian partners, to use the capacities of the state and the Romanian society in support of Moldova. The involvement of the Republic of Moldova in international structures, of which Romania is also part, would be a very positive support. It would be useful to explain the nature and content of economic relations between Romania and the Transnistrian region. Tiraspol exports a lot to Romania. From there, it procures raw materials and technologies. To explain, what reasons condition this collaboration, at first glance, untested in the aspect of Russian anti-Romanian propaganda. *Romania has a rich experience in the issue of interethnic relations, especially the "Lipovans". There is no doubt what would be the positive effect of establishing some contacts, relations between the Danube Delta inhabitants and those from Moldova and Transnistria*.¹

*“The notion of special status is an instrument of reexpanding Russia in the former Soviet republics, especially in Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. Russia has had federalization projects for both Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. The word federalization is rightly provoking such fears that the new denomination of federalization is a special status”*², says Vladimir Socor³, in an interview with HotNews.ro. Socor argues that Russia's interest in the Republic of Moldova is limited to the opening of a precedent in Transnistria, but the Kremlin is not able to support Chisinau. In his opinion, Romania is more influential in Moldova than Russia at the moment. Socor Vladimir supports some important ideas about the Russia-Moldova relationship, such as:

¹ https://www.dnews.ro/conflictul-din-transnistria-expert-de-la-chi-inau-pozi-ia-formatului-5-2-comoda-contribu-ia-romaniei_535667.html

² Vladimir Socor, analyst at Jamestown Foundation

- *The Republic of Moldova is not a priority of Russia's foreign policy. Russia has its hands full in the area with Ukraine and in another area with Syria, and now at the official level it suddenly manifests a deep disappointment to Donald Trump. Russia's leadership had great hopes in Trump;*

- *In the Kremlin's vision, Putin's gesture with that map was a sarcasm or a malicious gesture free of charge. Free from a political point of view. Neither Dodon nor Putin have the intention of creating a large Moldavia in the Carpathians;*

- *Russia is unable to support the Republic of Moldova. If Dodon's party by absurd came in the Republic of Moldova, economic support would fall into Russia's taks. Russia is not capable of supporting not even Transnistria, certainly not the Republic of Moldova. Russia has a limited interest in Moldova that Moldova should pursue a policy of balance between the West and Russia and consult Russia on major economic and foreign policy decisions;*

- *Russia wants to establish some precedents in the Republic of Moldova for use in other situations. For example, the precedent to renegotiate the EU-Moldova Association Agreement, to subject it to a three re-examination with the participation of Russia. An approach that Russia would like to impose on Ukraine. Success in Moldova would be a precedent;*

- *Granting a special status to Transnistria. The official goal of the 5 + 2 negotiations is to finally reach a special status. It has become the official, declared purpose, and that's why I think it would be a very dangerous thing. The notion of special status is an instrument of reexpansion of Russia in the former Soviet republics, especially in Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova;*

- *Russia has had federalization projects for both Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. The word federalization rightly provokes such fears that the new denomination of federalization is a special status. This status would integrate the secessionist territory and its representatives formally into the recognized state political system, but the territory would continue to be under Russian control and that territory would delegate its representatives to the political system of the reunified state with blocking powers. Decisional blocking for foreign policy decisions etc.*

- *In Transnistria there was a change for the worse after the election of Krasnoselski (the new president, replacing Sevcuic from December 2016). Transnistria opened a representative office in Moscow. It is called the representation of the Transnistria' president in the Russian Federation, which is a sort of first step towards the establishment of diplomatic missions;*

- *If Transnistria receives a so-called special status in which Transnistria would be part of the Republic of Moldova to a sufficient extent to be represented in institutions, but to an extent insufficient to be controlled by the Chisinau government, so it would remain under Russian de facto control, if Moldova accepts such a thing, we will wake up with a cascade of claims for special statutes. The Gagauzia administration has already announced that if Transnistria receives a special status, Gagauzia will ask to raise its status at the same level as Transnistria. The city of Balti will surely require a special status, it is populated by 70% of Russian speakers. So we will witness a cascade of claims of special statutes, with the danger of dismantling the Republic of Moldova;*

- *The question to which Western diplomats cannot answer is: if a special status for Transnistria is reached, what will happen to the Russian troops? No Western diplomat has been able to give me assurances that the Russian troops will withdraw. All political negotiations took place with the presence of Russian troops on the ground. The connection that had existed between granting special status and withdrawal of Russian troops disappeared. I think it is completely wrong for any Western diplomat to*

press the Republic of Moldova to consent to a special status as long as the Russian troops are on the ground and as long as no one can guarantee that the Russian troops would withdraw;

- At the present stage, the Republic of Moldova is incapable of absorbing Transnistria. The state in the Republic of Moldova is practically a collapsed state. Transnistria is a kind of proto-state supported by Russia, but otherwise Transdnistria is in some ways more viable than the Republic of Moldova. It has an internal propaganda that instills to population the feeling of belonging to a state and a specific type of identity, a post-national identity linked to the Russian world. The Republic of Moldova is not appealing for the ordinary population of Transnistria. The reintegration of Transnistria into the Republic of Moldova in this situation would lead to the complete disintegration of the Republic of Moldova. The institutions are so crashed, they will not be able to absorb Transnistria;

- Romania has instruments of influence in the Republic of Moldova with a major impact, which I sometimes feel under-appreciated. The Embassy of Romania, compared to Russia, is very influential in Chisinau. The Russian Embassy in contrast is not relevant in Chisinau, while the embassy of Romania and others are always consulted. Unfortunately, Romania has failed to complete the gas and electricity connection projects, this is a big drawback. Romania for the first time after the 90s is able to provide budget assistance to the republic of Moldova. I think Romania becomes more influential than Russia in Chisinau.¹

4. Russia's Internal and External Actions

About what Putin has done in recent years, both externally and internally, Cosmin Popa² shows that the political inventiveness resources of the regime are exhausted, and force and intimidation are beginning to play an increasingly important role in promoting Russian interests. Using and abusing power, outside and within the country, Putin potentiates the availability of those whom Russia regards as opponents to use force in their turn.

Started as a new, seemingly paradoxical modernization experiment, putinism turned into a catalyst for the return to classic realism, in which the alliances succeeded with stunning repetition, and the interests changed according to the personal perspective of talented politicians or monarchs full of political vitality. The historic role of the Russian Empire, the USSR, or the Russian Federation, believe Russian leaders, is to intervene decisively in the political game or in war when the confrontational camps are weak enough to be imposed conditions.

In fact, the country that occupies the sixth part of the land, which has the largest reserves of raw materials, which gave the world geniuses of science and culture and has an impressive arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, thinks international relations at the scale of a power medium-sized, preoccupied to ensure survival between the empires.

The attraction by Russian officials of governments and corporations in Western Europe in a “miracle” business line, in order to undermine Euro-Atlantic solidarity, is only a reflection of traditional Russian “realism”. *In order to stimulate the pride of a continent unable to find itself politically, since Stalin,*

¹ <http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-esential-21631527-video-cum-juca-rusia-moldova-transnistria-vladimir-socor-notiunea-statut-special-este-instrument-reexpansiune-rusiei.htm>.

² Cosmin Popa is a scientific researcher of the Nicolae Iorga Institute of History of the Romanian Academy. He is specialized in the history of the USSR/ Russia and the history of Central and Southeast Europe, the communist and contemporary period. He studied in Bucharest and Moscow and is a member of the bilateral Commission of Historians from Romania and Russia.

Russia still complained of Europe's pitiful mercy, subjugated by American "imperialism" or reduced to neocolonial status.

Putin tried and partly managed to cheat "Old Europe", helped by the mirage of a price of oil, which was only to grow, constantly whispering to his ear that Russia healed the imperial obsession and that the profit was the new ideology of the Kremlin.

So, Germany, France, Italy, but also good defenders of rights and freedoms, such as the Netherlands or Austria, have been pretending for years that they do not see how the institutions are formed and how the laws of putinist kleptocratic authoritarianism appear, nor how Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine were held in a kind of political imponderability by local politicians, perfectly integrated into mafia networks led by people in Putin's entourage. The August 2008 Georgian and February 2014 Ukraine forced the old European democracies, not without a healthy US pressure, to agree in some respect the claimed principles, the political declarations and the concrete actions.

Cosmin Popa analyst shows, in this context, Russia mistakes went on and on. *Annexation of Crimea, an act that came out somehow from the logic of Russian traditional political action, although allowed Putin to call himself "the unificator", like Stalin, meant leaving by Russia the "Ukrainian front", at least for the near and medium future.*

The challenge and support of the pro-putinist rebellion in Southeast Ukraine is nothing more than another desperate attempt to keep a number of strategic positions in the Ukrainian state by imposing a federalism to turn it into a nonfunctional entity.

The concerted pressures of Germany and France on Ukraine to accept the absurd terms of the "armistice" in Minsk in both versions show that Berlin and Paris have rushed to close the "file", accepting Russia's illegitimate interests in Ukraine, but trying, in parallel, to maintain its external worthiness. The non-application of the Minsk I and Minsk II provisions shows that the Russian-German-French stratagem to anchor Ukraine on the Moscow trailer, under the appearance of a democratic truce, failed, and Washington it is not alien to this.

Eventually, in their chaotic effort to reconcile action and claimed principles with their historic obsessions, Berlin and Paris ended by disappointing Russian "partners" and irritating American allies.

It is no surprise that the "New Europe" saw in the Ukrainian crisis an opportunity to reset the Euro-Atlantic security system, relying on a direct agreement with the US. As the Russians say, "farther, more". The international isolation of Russia and the imposition of sanctions have stimulated the creativity of Russian political propaganda. On all channels and through all major political actors, Russia accredits the idea that, while they officially support sanctions, Western countries are able to use any pretext to cancel them.

A number of marginal politicians in Western countries, a plethora of "reputable analysts", all kinds of exotic characters are strongly promoted by Russian environments, with statements stating the "absurd" of sanctions and the idea that Ukraine was "abandoned" by the West.

Sergei Lavrov does not forget to "remember" in every interview, and the last is no exception, that all "relevant" European countries, even the Americans, whisper to his ear that if they organize a new referendum in the Crimea after all the rules that Russia would win anyway, the sanctions would be immediately lifted. "Realism" makes Russia's leaders believe that anything can be traded in a lunch break, regardless of the number and quality of international obligations assumed by "partners".

Direct involvement in Syria, a decision meant not only to secure the Russian military presence in the Eastern Mediterranean, but especially to retrain Putin as a frequent partner of the West, is also a risky bet. Besides the fact that Russia has become the object of the hatred of an important part of the population that opposes Bashar al-Assad, Putin must avoid, almost at any price, a confrontation with ISIL extremists. Once attacked, they would create Russia a series of major “nuisances” in the North Caucasus and Central Asia. As things evolve in Syria, it is hard to believe that at the end of the war, Russia will only have to agree with Bashar al-Assad to maintain its bases in Tartus and Latakia.

In the meantime, Moscow is in full political and economic war with Ankara, and if the oil that President Erdogan's close friends, as Russian officials say buy it from ISIL is so much, the Islamic fundamentalists' reaction will not delay to appear.

Soon, Lavrov will have to mediate between Syrian Kurds and Bashar al-Assad, which is perfectly plausible in the Middle East, but that will reduce Russia's maneuvering space in Syria, forcing Putin to diversify the targets of the attacks of Russian aviation.

The alliance with China. Moreover, in search of markets for its resources and high tech suppliers for a number of strategic industry sectors, Russia claims it is about to conclude a major alliance with China. The noisy campaign around the start of the “Siberian Force” energy project, the transport system meant to link China to Russian resources, suspended for the time being because of the stubborn Chinese negotiation of the price of Russian gas, contrasts with the heavy silence surrounding the project.

Trying to prove to the West that he can resist without selling it oil and gas, Putin is about to “surrender” to China, knowing well that after Mongolia, Russia is the most exposed country to China's formidable expansion at all levels. True policymakers, the Chinese do not rush to respond to Russia's stingy signs of goodwill, expecting Moscow's bargaining margin to fall. The Great Dragon is now “only” experiencing an acute shortage of cultivated land, which Russia has in full use, being already connected to the international oil and gas supply system.

The “Russian variant” would immediately increase China's autonomy, but it would link it to a series of agreements that it should respect in the future, and it could bring better auspices than it does today. China can afford to wait. Russia?

Russia's policy towards European neighbors including Romania. Neither Russia's policy towards European neighbors does not excel in creativity, even if this does not make it less damaging. Although they kept all the force lines of imperial policy, the Bolsheviks brought a distinct note in foreign policy, where the dominant elements were violence and institutionalized lie.

The interval between the two wars can be considered the “golden age” of the subversive Russian foreign policy, with destabilizing effects.

The interposition of the “sanitary cordon” based on Romania and Poland between Soviet Russia and the Republic of Weimar strengthened Lenin's conviction that if Russia cannot control a country then it must at least be destabilized.

Propaganda, pure lying, corruption, subversive actions, the stipending of some local political forces, the instigation to rebellion and the intensification of internal and international dissensions have since become Russia's favorite tools in relations with the states of the area, which they perceive as hostile.

In his last interview, Lavrov, the one who constantly makes the parade of “retention” and “balance” of Russian diplomacy, did not hesitate to draw loosely a real “list of shame” with the states he considered “hysterical”.

Romania, Poland and the Baltic states, the old pillars of the “sanitary cordon”, were accused by the refined Lavrov that, instigated by Washington and assisted by the United Kingdom, “stir the myth of Russian dangers up to hysteria”.

As it has been accustomed to throughout its contemporary history, when it rages with its smaller neighbors, Russian propaganda leaves aside any diplomatic inhibitions, excelling in pettinesses, more bizarre. It is expected that the Russian press will fill again, in the following period, with articles and reports about poverty and crisis in the named states, as well as a series of Russian journalists' stories, which are more fanciful.

Schematic in its external actions, unable to overcome the era of state interests, Russia persists in not understanding that the international influence of a state is directly proportional to the progress it generates. *Putin's economic and social model, based on a massive state presence in all spheres, but funded by a huge oil price, almost collapses silently.*

Sadly for her, but also for the Europeans, Putin's Russia is not ready to put anything else in its place, trying to fill the void created with the brutal force and the illusion of an imperial restoration.

The primitive way in which he acts does not make it less devastating, but it gives those who are targeting precious indices of how it can be countered.

Putin's conservatism, imposed on society as a formula for reconciliation with the past, now in a state of crisis, rekindles the war of the Russians with their own history, urging them again to approach to them not only hatred and bias, but also the acute feeling of an incomplete accomplishment.¹

5. Putin's Battle to Maintain His Power in Russia

Vladimir Putin's authority is increasingly challenged, which worries the Kremlin leader. As a result, the President of Russia has begun to take measures to prevent instability and to stifle potential dissidence movements. Even if Putin surrenders to many Kremlin elites, he will not get away from political purges if necessary. And Putin's most dangerous opponent might turn out to be even someone close to him - the leader of the lower chamber of the State Duma, Viaceslav Volodin, according to an analysis by Stratfor.

A report by Moscow's Carnegie Center, quoted by Stratfor, shows that the battle for power in Russia will be given in the State Duma. If until now the Russian parliament was a tool used by Vladimir Putin to give him legitimacy and to strengthen his power through various legislative acts, now it is not anymore the Russian President the one giving the orders but the new president of the lower chamber of the Duma, Viaceslav Volodin.

Ever since he came to the leadership of Russia, initially as prime minister, then as president, Vladimir Putin did everything in his power to strengthen his power over the State Duma, writes Stratfor. In order to ensure that he keeps control over the Russian Parliament, Putin needed to appoint a strong and loyal leader at Duma's leadership. He chose Viaceslav Volodin, the one who helped him manage the crisis created in Russia in 2012 after the parliamentary vote was defrauded. Stratfor writes that *Volodin has long wanted to be part of the Kremlin elite, but he has never had the necessary power. Normally, his job now does not allow him to achieve this goal, but his position is much more important in the context of Putin's need for laws to pass through the Duma to receive more much power. In this context, Volodin began to take steps to strengthen his own power.*

¹ <http://www.ziare.com/vladimir-putin/presedinte-rusia/realismul-rusesc-sau-diplomatia-obsesiilor-1408241>.

Stratfor writes *that what happens to Volodin is not at all new, on the contrary it fits in a pattern. In recent years, several close friends of Putin preferred to pursue their own goals, even if it meant defying the Russian president.*

For example, in 2016, Rosneft chief, Igor Secin, took over a majority stake in rival company Bashneft behind Putin. He also ignored the orders of the Russian leader to sell the company's shares to buyers on an approved list and has chosen his own partners. Stratfor also writes that the president of Chechnya criticized on social networks the Ministry of Finance's initiative to cut federal subsidies for his region, suggesting that, in the absence of funds, the country already affected by the war, could become unstable. And Sergei Cemezov, the head of the Rostec defense state giant, bought various companies to make sure his company infiltrated every arm of the Russian military-industrial complex, an action Putin tried to prevent in the past.

But this is not the most worrying, says Stratfor, and even unexpected. *A surprise, however, is that politicians in the second or third echelon began to deviate from the Kremlin line, especially leaders from regional governments. Some have removed local government structures to ensure their stay in power. Putin's answer has not been expected: in the past three weeks he has dismissed six regional leaders.* Also, on February 17, it was also he the one who organized a Security Council meeting to claim that a huge sweeping purification operation would develop aimed at regional governments.

Stratfor writes that *Vladimir Putin needs loyal close friends to implement his strategy. And if at the moment Viaceslav Volodin is one of them, the situation could become disastrous for the president of Russia if the president of the lower chamber of Duma will gain more power.*

Russia is a country that is almost surrounded by land, with difficult access to the sea, and this defines its geopolitical strategy as its most, to fight to push its frontiers to the West, according to American analyst George Friedman¹, in a Forbes article. That is why, he shows, *Russia is more like Sparta, not Athens, if we look at the ancient models of development.* A nation that pulls its strength not from wealth, like the West, but from the effort to overcome the hardships and vulnerabilities it faces, is more united, and from its simple geography it can actually reveal the danger to the West, however bad would be its economy, Friedman considers.

The American shows that *the most important feature of Russia is that it is caught nearly complete between lands. The European Peninsula is surrounded by three sides of the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea. The division to Russia is seen on the map if we draw a line from St. Petersburg to Rostov on Don. The line almost coincides with the eastern border of the Baltic countries, Belarus and Ukraine.*

Moreover, *Europe controls Russia's access to the oceans*, says George Friedman. European Russia has three points to access international maritime trade: through the Black Sea and the Bosphorus Strait - a Turkey-controlled route that can easily be blocked through the Denmark waters from St. Petersburg - and this passage is easily blockable, and through the Arctic Ocean, to Murmansk, crossing Greenland, Iceland and the UK. The access of a country to the sea can greatly influence its economic and political power.

The Russian population is concentrated along its western border with Europe and at the southern border with the Caucasus (the region between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea). Siberia is sparsely populated, and its rivers and infrastructure are heading west. The heart of Russia's agriculture is in the southwest. North Russia cannot support agriculture, which makes Russia's border with Ukraine and that of the

¹ George Friedman – the manager of *Stratfor Analysis Group*.

Caucasus and Central Asia vital. As in the population, the west and south are the most productive Russian agricultural areas.

The importance of these two regions - the West and the South - can also be seen from Russia's transport infrastructure. Railways remain critical in Russia, and they are oriented to the West and to the former Soviet republics. Only two routes link European Russia to the Pacific maritime region, and Siberia is almost isolated, shows the American analyst.

Being a terrestrial power, Russia is vulnerable, being situated on the European Plain with few natural barriers to defend it from Western enemies. To the east of the Carpathian Mountains, the plain goes south, and the gate of Russia is open, says Friedman. To this is added that Russia has few rivers, which makes domestic transport difficult and reduces economic efficiency. That is why, *Russia's strategy is to move its frontier as far as possible. European countries from the first Eastern line - the Baltics, Belarus, and Ukraine - provide Russia with the depth from which Russia can project its power and present economic opportunities.*

At present, the Russian border has not been so close to Moscow for a long time, losing control over both country lines from the European Peninsula. The West absorbed the Baltic countries in NATO, bringing St. Petersburg a few hundred kilometers from the North Atlantic block. To stabilize the situation, they fought the Chechens, intervened in Georgia and sent troops to Armenia.

However, after 1991, the key country for Russia was Ukraine, because the border with it was passing through the heart of Russian agriculture, the most populated areas and the transport nodes.

In the current conflict with Ukraine, Russia assumes that Europeans and Americans have a goal beyond creating a pro-Western regime in Kiev. From their perspective, this buffer zone was lost, and Ukrainian forces hostile to Russia advanced near the Russian border. The situation is precarious for Russia at this time, and this means that things will not remain like this in Ukraine, because Russia cannot assume that the West's interests in the region come from good intentions. At the same time, the West cannot assume that Russia, if occupying Ukraine, will stop here. That is why we are in the classical situation where two forces assume the worst one about the other. However, Russia is in a weaker position, shows Friedman.

Although Russia has been involved in the conflict in Syria, demonstrating its military capabilities and gaining strength against the West, this operation is peripheral to Russia's interests, for which the western border and Ukraine as well as the southern Caucasus remain the main objectives.

It is clear that Russia's economy, based on energy exports, is doing badly because of the collapse in oil prices, but Russia's economy has always been bad. That did not prevent her from winning the Second World War. The difficulties unite the Russians. Why Russia is Sparta rather than Athens. Thucydide distinguished Athens and Sparta, showing that Athens is closer to the sea and has an excellent port in Piraeus, while Sparta was not a maritime power. Athens was much richer than Sparta, because it could make international trade much easier than Sparta, surrounded by land. That is why Athens was rich, but there were two flaws here: the luxury that corrupts and the vast experience that creates moral ambiguity. On the other hand, Sparta was much poorer than Athens, not based on trade, but on hard work. It did not know the world but had a robust sense of good and evil.

This distinction could also be made between the European Peninsula and Russia, according to George Friedman. Europe pulls its power out of wealth, but it is also prone to internal struggles. Russia, though provincial, is rather united and pulls its power out of difficulties.

It is not prosperity that unites the Russians, but the idealized vision of loyalty to the Russian Mother, and from this point of view there is a deep fault between Europe and the US, on the one hand, who use

prosperity as a justification for loyalty, and Russia, where loyalty derives from state power and the inherent definition of being Russian. All this gives the Russians an opportunity. No matter how bad the economy would go, the simplism of their geographical position gives them the ability to surprise their opponents and perhaps make them more dangerous, Friedman says in the conclusion of his analysis.¹

6. Conclusions

Moldova is considered to be decisive for the redesign of the regional geopolitical configuration. Located on the southern flank and considered a NATO and Russia buffer zone, it was wickedly compressed between two powerful force fields, with little chance of finding a way out.

The Transnistrian problem is no longer an internal problem of the Republic of Moldova, it is an international one and it can be solved only with the help of the international community and only after the Russian military retreat from the region. The real democratization of the Transnistrian region could only begin after the withdrawal of the Russian troops, after the demilitarization of the region and the liquidation of the structures in the region to suppress the democratic values. The presence of Russian troops on the territory of Moldova is the main cause of the failure to democratize the country and its autonomous development, and the influence of force instruments is felt in all sectors of political life. Transnistria is maintained in the so-called “frozen conflict” but everyone is aware that Moscow can always “warm up the situation” if it sees its interests threatened.

This military outbreak is an essential factor in keeping Russia's control over the entire area. No political analysis can disregard the presence of the regional military force. Hence the discussion about the real authority of the Moldovan state. This is the brief summary of Bessarabian issues...²

From a geopolitical perspective, Russia has two major problems: a bad demography and difficult/impossible to defend frontiers. At present, Russia's south and west borders stretch over 11,000 km, from the Caucasus Mountains to the Arctic Circle. Russia already does not have enough troops to defend this border, and due to negative demographic trends it will have fewer available soldiers in the future. That is why Russia needs to shorten its border to about 1,500 km, much easier to control/ defend. Russia would only need some clever moves on the geopolitical chessboard: to head west and occupy three major cities: Riga, the eastern half of Warsaw and Bucharest. Is it possible? What will NATO do?

We do not know the answer. But we saw how Russia can do it: in a way that NATO and other countries of the European Union do not appreciate at the real scale and significance of the Russian territorial advances until it is too late. We have seen relatively recently how Russia has quickly entered a country, either officially or unofficially, as in the case of Ukraine, under the pretext of protecting native Russians or Russians from the former Soviet Union. It happened in 2008, when Russia invaded Georgia, and much more recently, when Russia invaded Crimea and vast portions of eastern Ukraine. In both cases, the international response was just a noisy indignation and some occasional economic sanctions. However, NATO has never felt the need to trigger a war due to the two invasions. I think NATO will have the same reaction when Russia moves forward in Ukraine, Moldova and the Caucasus. But if a Russian invasion of the Baltic countries is to come, I think NATO will react. But the Baltic countries will be conquered very quickly, possibly in a weekend, and NATO will not be able to defend them initially.

¹ <http://www.gandul.info/international/zece-harti-care-explica-strategia-rusiei-15089856>.

² <http://cyd.ro/tinta-geopolitica-rusiei/>.

An analogy between the pre-World War II situation and what is now happening with Russia is a must. The great historical lesson of Munich should not be forgotten. Even if in Russia the geopolitical twilight is approaching.¹

The EU's contribution to conflict resolution in the European space was mainly in the form of economic aid. European funding is an important support for conflicting communities, but it is not the most effective solution to conflict resolution. The EU has also been involved in supporting the dialogue between the parties, but has failed to remove the existing borders between the various conflicting communities.

Addressing conflicts in the immediate neighborhood is important for the EU, both because of their negative effects on neighboring countries and the security risks they pose to the EU. The problems faced by the Republic of Moldova, and here I am referring especially to the Transnistrian conflict, are major obstacles in the process of democratization and, at the same time, sources of instability for the rest of Europe.

However, the EU is not generally perceived as an important actor, but rather as a “neutral benefactor”. This has its advantages, but also underlines the limited role that the EU assumes in the transformation of conflicts. The EU is not an independent actor, because its actions depend on local political conditions, nor does it have a direct impact on society.

7. Bibliography

International Relations Dictionary - XX Century, Volume coordinated by Maurice Vaisse, (2008). Polirom.

(2006). EU Action Plan - Republic of Moldova. ADEPT Guide. Chisinau: Gunivas Publishing House.

Republic of Moldova - Anti-Democracy Sinking of Galagious Government, *Country Report 2003*, Coordinator: Iulian Chifu (2004). Politeea-Snsa Publishing House.

Igor, Cașu (1991). *National Politics in Soviet Moldova (1944-1989)*. Paris: France Loisirs Publishing House.

Cioroianu, Adrian (2009). *Matrioskai's Geopolitics - Post-Soviet Russia in the New World Order*. Bucharest: Curtea Veche Publishing House.

Crânganu, Constantin *Russia the Closeness of (Geopolitical) Twilight*, According to - <http://www.contributors.ro/global-europa/rusia-apropierea-amurgului-geopolitic/>.

Petrescu, Cristina (2007). *Construction of National Identity in Bessarabia* In Monica Heintz (coord.), *Weak State. Uncertain Citizenship*. Studies about the Republic of Moldova. Bucharest: Curtea Veche Publishing House.

March, Patrick G. (1996). *Eastern Destiny: Russia in Asia and the North Pacific*. Greenwood Publishing Group.

Oleg Serebrian in *Transnistrian Conflict: Geopolitics and Geohistory* <http://transnistria.md/ro/articles/0/542/>.

Negrut, Silviu (2005). *Introduction to Geopolitics*. Bucharest: Meteor Press.

<http://transnistria.md/ro/articles/0/542/>.

<http://transnistria.md/ro/articles/0/542/>.

https://www.dnews.ro/conflictul-din-transnistria-expert-de-la-chi-inau-pozi-ia-formatului-5-2-comoda-contribu-ia-romaniei_535667.html.

¹ <http://www.contributors.ro/global-europa/rusia-apropierea-amurgului-geopolitic/>.

<http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-esential-21631527-video-cum-juca-rusia-moldova-transnistria-vladimir-socor-notiunea-statut-special-este-instrument-reexpansiune-rusiei.htm>.

<http://www.ziare.com/vladimir-putin/presedinte-rusia/realismul-rusesc-sau-diplomatia-obsesiilor-1408241>.

<http://www.gandul.info/international/zece-harti-care-explica-strategia-rusiei-15089856>.

<http://cyd.ro/tinta-geopolitica-rusiei/>.

<http://www.contributors.ro/global-europa/rusia-apropierea-amurgului-geopolitic/>.