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Romania and the Black Sea Geopolitics

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Subjects of interest: Romania in the context of international relationships, history of foreign capital in Romania, relationships between Romania and Italy.

Abstract: *The present article discusses upon the new tendencies in the Romanian geopolitics, which, under the impact of globalization and, much more, of Euro-Atlantic integration, have framed an increased visibility of Romania abroad and overseas. By making use of its status, as riverain country to the Black Sea, Romania operates as an important actor of stability and security for this area, trying to act more and more like a real regional power, by signing new cooperation, agreements and partnerships.*

Keywords: geopolitics, geo-strategy, Black Sea, security, strategy

After the end of the Cold War, the main problem of Europe was to geopolitically reintegrate and recover the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. This generated the beginning of a logical process of expansion of the European Union borders. If the phenomenon of integration of the first group of 12 countries was motivated by economic reasons, the motivations for the further integration of the ex-Yugoslavia countries were geopolitical in nature. One of the major significance of the expansion towards the Centre and East of Europe was the insertion within the communitarian space of some areas of strategic importance, such as Poland, Romania or Bulgaria. The geopolitical argument in which regards the eastern border of the European Union points to the construction of clear

frontiers between the Baltic countries and Byelorussia, between Poland and Ukraine between Romania and the Republic of Moldavia, between Greece and Turkey and their aquatic frontier, the North part of the Mediterranean Sea (Dobrescu, 2003: 135).

The geopolitics of integration determined modifications in the structure of large European geopolitical spaces such as Eastern Europe, Western Balkans (the states of ex-Yugoslavia, Albania), the Black Sea; as well as new approaches to security and defense. The Republic of Moldavia has expressed the desire to integrate the Euro-Atlantic community, and the Russian Federation signed a strategic partnership with the European Union (2004-2005), but it also enhanced the proceedings for the integration of the republics of the ex-soviet bloc (such as Byelorussia and the states of Middle Asia).

In conformity with the principles of Foreign Policy and Common Security and with which specified by the European Policies of Security and Defence, as well as with the purposes of the cooperation system, the European Union is interested in promoting geopolitical directions which focus on: the relationships with the USA and the Russian Federation, the reinforcement of the NATO structures, the redefinition of the relationships with the Western Balkans and the exploitation of the geopolitical potential of the Mediterranean Sea, of the Black Sea and of their immediate vicinity. Regarding the last aspect, starting from 2007, the EU implemented the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, as the main financial tool sustaining the European Neighbourhood Policy, to which Romania submits its own principles of foreign policy.

1. The Romanian Geopolitics in the Context of European Integration

From the perspective of foreign policy, the Romanian integration in the communitarian structures meant that it assumed, appropriated and sustained the principles of the European Common Policy, in agreement with its national policies. The newly acquired statute as well as its well known geo-strategic location constitute favourable elements meant to legitimate a more important role of Romania, as a mediator and leader in different geo-political contexts: the Balkans Area, the Extended Black Sea Area and the Eastern European neighbourhood. Thus, the process of adherence of Romania to the EU

determined not only profound transformations at a local, internal level, but also effects which put their imprint at a regional, external level. The document-project elaborated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Repere pentru un deceniu de politică externă: Interese, Valori, Instrumente* (*Cardinal Points for a Century of Foreign Policy: Interests, Values, Instruments*) of September 2007, describes the objectives of the Romanian foreign policy, elaborated on medium and long term period: the communitarian tendencies, the intra-communitarian dynamics, the transatlantic relationships, the Black Sea Region, the Russian Federation, the Romania southern neighbourhood, respectively Islam, the Mediterranean dialogue, Middle Orient.

A topic of real interest for Romania is constituted by the development of the international cooperation and security within the Black Sea Region, reason for which, Romania actively sustains the necessity to increase the involvement of some relevant actors such as the European Union, NATO and OSCE. It becomes more and more evident that Romania begins to be carried away by development and by the expansion towards the occidental basin of the Black Sea, and in a greater context, towards the Caspian Sea-Black Sea-Mediterranean Sea Axis. We have to highlight the more and more important role that Romania can assume in the imposition of certain coordinated actions such as the ones relative to the GUAM states (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, the Republic of Moldavia, Estonia and Lithuania), by retaking into discussion, for example, the debates on the power to maintain peace by increasing the patrol actions in the Black Sea Area. By beginning with the identification of new solutions for maintaining security within the Black Sea Area, Romania vividly sustains the adherence to NATO of countries such as Georgia and Ukraine.

On the other hand, the fact that the European Union tends towards developing axes of security mainly focalized on the new neighbourhoods, makes it so that Romania acquires a more and more relevant role on the Eastern border of the European Union. Consequently, after the integration, Romania sensibly modified its bilateral agreements with the neighbour ex-soviet states, in a communitarian perspective (the attempt to solve some problems such as the Băstroe Channel with Ukraine, or the granting of vistas for the Republic of Moldavia). It is clear that Romania, as a democratic state member of the UE, wishes to exercise a political, economical as well as cultural influence upon the states at the Eastern borders of the Union.

The ways in which this can be accomplished are not only geostrategic (i.e. mediation, cooperation, coordinated actions, trans-frontier collaborations) or political (i.e. democratic political and institutional principles) in nature, but also economic (i.e. bilateral commercial exchange, investments from private enterprises) and cultural (i.e. artistic and academic collaborations, etc.).

It is necessary to make the difference between the concept of geo-strategy and that of geopolitics. The first term refers to the report between international politics, political power and geographical characteristics (Cohen, 1973: 64), while as the second term refers to the strategic management of geopolitical interests (Brzezinski, 2000: 43). In fact, geopolitics studies the interests of the political actors within a well defined space, elaborating scenarios while as geo-strategy has the role to point to the ways and means to be used in order that the above mentioned scenarios be put into practice. (Hlihor, 2002: 38).

The perspectives regarding foreign policy and the strategic management of geopolitical interests allow us to make predictions regarding the increasing importance of Romania becoming an international actor. The road to achieve such a position is rather difficult, both at a conceptual level and at the level of event interpretation. In the official domestic documents, Romania is perceived as “*a state which holds particular competences especially within the Eastern European Area*”, willing and wishing to play “*a predominant role in the Black Sea Region*” (*Strategia de Securitate Națională a României*, 2007: 29-37). However, the use of some ambiguous terms, such as “*vector of security at a European and regional level*” creates confusions in which regards the role of political power or of regional leader that Romania presumably assumes, as mentioned in various occasions by President Băsescu (*Băsescu negociază cu Bush statutul de lider regional*, 2005). The Romanian authorities believe that Romania may be considered a regional power should it assume a pro-active role in which regards the regional security of Central and South-East Europe (*Strategia*, 2007: 29-37). By taking into consideration its strategic position on the Black Sea, the interior as well as foreign mass media admits the possibility that Romania may actually become a regional power (Rudnitschi, 2010). By analyzing the tight relationship between power and regional security, the literature of specialty of the field considers that Romania has all the elements necessary to allow it to become a geopolitical fulcrum, and even a regional power (Hanganu, Marinescu,

Chiorcea, 2007: 7). In Z. Brzezinski's opinion, the geopolitical fulcra are more than simple political actors because their geographical location "*grants them a more specific role, both for the fact that it stays within their power to grant access to important areas, and for the fact that they can deny such access to resources, even to leading political actors*" (Marin, 2008: 164-167).

2. Romania and the Black Sea Geopolitics

The approach to the problem of the Pontic Area is undoubtedly complex and the prognostics given by the historian Gheorghe Brătianu, in which regards the destiny of the Black Sea, is more than relevant: „*the scenery offered by the Black Sea basin favours [...] considerations which go beyond regional issues and are formulated based on the forces having relevant impact on global history*" (Brătianu, 1988: 34).

The geographic identity of the Black Sea is practically delineated by six riverain states: Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Russia, Georgia. According to the opinion of specialists in matters of security and geopolitics, we should consider adding the neighbouring zones, The Republic of Moldavia, the Caspian Region, (Armenia, Azerbaijan) as well as the Balkans Area (Greece, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Croatia and Slovenia). Together, the above mentioned zones constitute the Extended Black Sea Area (abbreviated ZEMN in Romanian, respectively EBSA in English).

Located at the crossroads between three major axes of relevance - Europe (and its sub-regions: Central Europe, South-East Europe, Western Europe), the Middle East and Central Asia – the geopolitical region of the Black Sea is one of most significant zones of transit of energetic resources and the space where major risks and conflict of interests occur, causing a huge impact on the Euro-Atlantic security. Far from being considered a simple intermediate or periphery zone, the Black Sea Region is a connector of strategic importance, located on the axis which connects the transatlantic community (security providing and energy consuming agent) to the Middle East–Caspian Region–Central Asia (energy supplying and security benefitting agent). The Black Sea Region is the main

energy transit space, holding one of the most important energy fonts (gas, petrol) which supply great part of Europe's energy consumption (Strategia, 2007: 32).

On another hand, due to the acceleration of the processes of globalization and regional integration, the redefining of the political and strategic context of the area (reaching implicitly the topic of security) draws the attention of four huge geopolitical actors: the European Union, NATO, the United States of America and Russia. The geopolitical pluralism of the Extended Black Sea Area resides in its characteristics and it is regulated by agreements, strategic collaborations or the creation of geopolitical axes.

The European Union is interested in the geopolitics of the Black Sea, both for reasons of security and stability within its vicinity; since the European Neighbourhood Policy includes also a strategy for Eastern Europe and the Black Sea Area, and for economic reasons, since nowadays the European Union is highly dependent on the Russian energy resources.

In order to reinforce its role within the Extended Black Sea Area, the EU signed collaboration agreements with Ukraine (geostrategic fulcrum on the Black Sea) as well as with the Republic of Moldavia, also allowing Romania and Bulgaria to be integrated into the communitarian space. The integration of the two states signified a better insurance of safety and security in the Balkans, which still remains an inter-regional reality of Christian-Muslim interference.

As far as the North-Atlantic Organization is concerned, its expansion within the Western and Southern side of the Black Sea basin was possible due to the fact that it included in its structures Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria and Slovenia, by signing security and stability treaties with these countries. Much more, the ex-soviet states, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, expressed in 2004 their availability to adhere to NATO.

The Russian Federation, up to the fall of communism the main economic and military force (resources, navy) within the Black Sea Area, faces, in these last years, the problem of having to reconstruct its own geopolitical identity, which includes maintaining, through the Black Sea, its access to the "warm seas". Besides its disputes with Ukraine for the maritime control in Crimea, Russia manifested its intention to consolidate its own geopolitical position in its "near vicinity" (strategy elaborated in 2007). From the point of

view of economy, we notice the aggressiveness with which the Russian enterprises Gazprom and Lukoil policies penetrate the energy markets in the Extended Black Sea Area: Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey and Romania. Unlike NATO and the EU, the Russian Federation reinforced its collaboration with the CIS states – Byelorussia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, and Tajikistan – by forming the Eurasian Economic Community (2005) and later by initializing the project of a monetary union (2010).

The United States of America is the promoter of a unique strategy on the Black Sea, due to its geopolitical (the desire to reaffirm its statute of global power), military (its politics of security and continuous fight against Asian terrorism) and economic (its need to stimulate free access to the energy resources of the area) attributes. Regarding the collaboration between the EU and the USA, as a compulsory condition for the global equilibrium, the prognostics of some of the most important analysts converge to the idea of common action (Şimandan, 2008: 94-95). The military collaboration between the USA and Romania in which regards the hosting of an anti-missile shield, which will insure Europe against air missile attacks, is part of the same geostrategic logics.

Turkey, geostrategic fulcrum in the Black Sea Area just like Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, was the initiator of many international projects which included Romania: the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (1992), the Black Sea Naval Cooperation project (BLACKSEAFOR, 1998), a naval group, formed by the union of the military naval forces of riverain states such as: Bulgaria, Romania, Georgia, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine, or the operation *Black Sea Harmony* (2004), a project allowing the taking of repressive actions against terrorism on the Black Sea. Despite the fact that Turkey significantly intensified and improved its collaboration with the EU (i.e. by initiating in October 2005 negotiations for a possible integration into the communitarian space), its policy in which regards the Black Sea is contradictory, since it is still trying to keep it a “closed sea” by its strategic partnership with Russia (Ionescu, 2006: 382-383).

In the complex context of different geopolitical and economic interests concerning the Black Sea Area, the association of states on geopolitical axes reinforces the reciprocal sustainment of development for the common welfare and to the common purpose. One of the most promising geopolitical axes with an enormous potential for Europe is the axis

Rhine-Main-Danube-Black Sea (involving Germany, Austria, Hungary and Romania) which offers Germany, a central continental country, the possibility and advantage of open access to the Black Sea, by highlighting and enhancing the strategic role of the Danube-Black Sea Channel and facilitating the access of the participant states to the Caspian Sea. The formation of such axis highlights once more the importance of the Black Sea Area as a tactical area, allowing rather traditional exchange of merchandise and services, but also its strategic role, in the construction of gas pipe-line networks, maritime access ways, terrestrial and air secured traffic and circulation of financial fluxes.

The other axes involving interferences within the Pontic Area are: the Caspian Sea-East Mediterranean Sea one, “*a macro-interests adduction corridor*” (Marin, 2008: 259), and the Baltic-Pontic-Adriatic Space, reuniting areas with common economic interests, but frequent armed conflicts. Thus, some specialists assess that due to the existence of the above mentioned axes Romania is constantly submitted to geopolitical pressure from West Asia, as well as from East Europe. Nevertheless, the balance of such pressure was alleviated a lot by its integration within the NATO structures (Marin, 2008: 259).

The strategic importance of the Extended Black Sea Area resides in its relevant energy resources, which include the natural reserves within its perimeter (the ones from the Black Sea platform) and those belonging to its near vicinity (the natural reserves of fossil fuel, oil and gas, of the Caspian republics: Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan). The above mentioned attribute to the Pontic Area an extreme importance in which the traffic and transportation of energy is concerned. Regarding the transportation of oil from the Caspian region towards Europe, through the Black Sea Area there have been initiated a series of projects sustaining the use of pipes or oil cisterns (Turkey playing a key role in this case, by insuring protection of the two straits). Romania sustains the necessity to diversify the sources of energy and the ways by which the hydrocarbons are being supplied, by means of a southern corridor for the transportation of oil.

The project regarding the construction of the Constanța-Trieste Pan-European Oil Pipeline was initiated in 2005 with the purpose of transporting oil from the Caspian Sea (Baku) to Europe, through the Supsa (Georgia) terminals, respectively through those of Constanța (Romania). The pipeline of 1.360 km, half of which on the territory of Romania, should be functional by 2010, under a capacity of 112 million tons of oil (Cioacă, 2010).

Geo-strategically speaking, this pipeline shall reduce the dependency of Europe on the oil supplied by the Middle East, shall no longer be conditioned by the Russian control, and shall contribute to the fluidization of the traffic in the Bosphorus-Dardanelles Straits. It is more difficult and dangerous to initiate the project for a terrestrial pipeline for the distribution of gas, which should connect Russia to Turkey, respectively the Caspian Area to Austria, Germany and Italy through Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania (the Nabucco agreement of July 2009). The same stands for the maritime pipeline Crimea-Turkey. On the territory of Romania transits the functional pipeline Russia-Greece, which supplies gas from an only source (Russia). The Romanian participation to the above mentioned projects has the purpose of reinforcing its role in the field of energetic security.

3. The Romanian strategy in which concerns the Extended Black Sea Area

By considering Gheorghe Brătianu's assertion that *„you can never fully understand Romania's history without understanding first the roads and influences found at a confluence [...] within the Black Sea Area”*, we must say that the Pontic space contributes to reinforce the geopolitical and economic role of Romania, helping it to become a real regional power (Brătianu, 1988: 35).

Conform to the principles of the Romanian Strategy of National Security of 2007, the Romanian state holds the strategic interest to affirm itself as a dynamic vector of security and prosperity within the Black Sea basin and, implicitly, in the Extended Black Sea Area. It also expresses Romania's intentions to become actively involved in defending the projection, affirmation and management of its own interests (especially those regarding energy) within the region (Strategia, 2007: 32). The document describes the Black Sea Area as a geopolitical space, opened to the international democratic community within which the European Union continuously expands, increasing its responsibility, the contribution of the North Atlantic Alliance is constantly growing and the presence of operative American actions is more and more visible.

In the context of the trans-Atlantic balance of powers insured by the UE-SUA partnership, the Romanian state gave special attention to some bilateral agreements with the USA such as: the Commercial Agreement (attributing one another the most favoured nation clause, signed in 1992), the Strategic Partnership (1997) and the Agreement regulating the presence and activity of the United States armed forces on the Romanian territory (2005). Just like other Baltic countries such as the Czech Republic and Poland, Romania sustained the American administration policy of dislocation of its bases towards Eastern Europe, despite the malcontent displayed by Moscow.

The decision to install the anti-missile shield in Romania in February 2010 holds different significance. It highlights the enforcement of the strategic partnership with the USA since the Obama administration gave up the initial idea to install the same shield in Poland, the Romanian desire to affirm itself as an important actor in the Extended Black Sea Area, by contributing to the security of the Pontic space as well as to the security of Europe, in the purpose of creating a more homogenous space for the Black Sea Region. If the Atlantic Council, in charge of maintaining the quality of leader of the United States in the world, considers the creation of the new axes Washington-Berlin-Bucharest, which would hold a strategic role on the Black Sea and on the Danube; we can seriously believe in the opportunity Romania has in becoming a regional power in the Black Sea context (Sergentu, 2010). The increase in its geostrategic role within the Black Sea Area as well as in Central Europe is thus more evident, since it over ranked Poland in its negotiations with the American partner, anticipating at the right moment a similar geo-strategic move from Bulgaria. Thanks to the anti-missile shield, Romania shall dispose of 3 anti-missiles terrestrial batteries, each containing 8 anti-air rides missiles of "Standard Missile 3" type, which shall be installed on its territory by 2015, thus constituting the NATO shield of defence against the possible Iran attacks upon Europe. Besides the geostrategic, military (by improving the Romanian army gear and equipments) and economic (by attracting the American investors), advantages, the shield could bring further modifications in the relationships between Romania and Russia. Despite the fact that the installation of the anti-missile shield was previously discussed by Washington and Moscow, Russia asked Romania and Bulgaria to argument their actions, and Ukraine to take attitude with respect to this issue with heavy geopolitical and geo-strategic impact. Much more, the new military doctrine of Russia, enforced immediately after the official announcement of the

location of the shield, stipulates as external threat „*the creation and installation of any anti-missile systems which could compromise global stability*” (Sergentu, 2010).

The Strategy of National Security highlights that Romania acts in the direction of institutionalizing the Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership. This initiative has the purpose of reinforcing the cooperation with the states riverain to the Black Sea – Bulgaria, Georgia, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine – as well as with the states of its immediate neighbourhood (Strategia, 2007: 34-35). Since Romania stands under American tutelage and its relationships with Russia are growing more and more towards a descending slope, its geopolitical context has to be reformulated in which regards the politics adopted by the USA in the context of Moscow. Regarding the bilateral relationships with Ukraine, we must mention the Romanian success in the resolution brought to the Serpent’s Island issue by the Decision of February 2009 given by the International Justice Court in Hague, which allows Romania the right to exploit almost 9.700 square kilometres of the continental Black Sea platform, and implicitly the right over 80% of the natural resources of hydrocarbons: 70 billion m³ of gas, as well as 12 million tons of oil, from the continental platform around Serpent’s Island (Necșuțu, 2010).

Another strategic direction can be defined in relationship with the Republic of Moldavia, since Romania has “*the political and moral duty to sustain this state during the process of modernization, democratization and integration to the European structures*” (Necșuțu, 2010). In the particular case of the Republic of Moldavia, the Romanian state’s foreign policy was already foreseeing in the ‘90s the necessity of developing the Romanian-Moldavian relationships, by encouraging the fight for human rights, the consolidation of a democratic system, economic reform and the Romanian culture in a soviet and Russian environment. Despite this, the development of the bilateral relationships was slowed down by the involvement and pressures of the communist and/or pro-Russian orientation of the majority of the Moldavian politicians, as well as by the economic dependency from Russia of the Republic of Moldavia, reflected especially by the foreign policy of the country. The integration of Romania into the European Union structures was the main reason for which the pro-Russian government of Vronin started a real political offence against Bucharest. The visit of President Bănescu at Chișinău in August 2008 reinforced once more the certitude that sensitive dossiers such as the Basic

and Frontier Treaty and the Agreement for Small Scale Frontier Traffic cannot be resolved but in time. Still it confirmed once more Romania's attempt to strategically affirm itself as a leader on the Black Sea.

In the general context of the European Politics of Neighbourhood, the frame of the trans-frontier cooperation for the period 2007-2013 stipulates the partnership between Romania and the Republic of Moldavia, concretized by two programs financed by European funds: the Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldavia Program and the Cooperation in the Black Sea basin Program. The nominalization of Mihai Ghimpu as president *ad interim* of the Republic of Moldavia allows the constructive redefinition of the Romanian-Moldavian relationships. In February 2010 the Romanian government decided to assign a non reimbursable loan in value of 100 million euro for the sustainment of the Moldavian infrastructure, and the permit of free traffic on the Eastern border for Moldavian citizens starting from 31 March 2010 (Morovan, 2010).

Undoubtedly, Romania plays the role of promoter for the Moldavian interests in which concerns the European Union (the connection of the energetic and transportation networks, the supplementation of funds for the eastern neighbourhood), supporting the attempts of the Republic of Moldavia to be included among the Western Balkan countries, action which opens the road to future possibility of integration in the communitarian space. In this context, Macedonia and Serbia have already filled in documents, requiring the beginning of the procedures of negotiation with the European Union in view of their near adherence. Croatia signed an agreement of association with the EU, and Albania and the other potential candidates such as (Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro) vividly hope in the continuance of the tendencies of expansion, which would politically complete the process of unification of the continent. The level of political and institutional development of the Republic of Moldavia, much lower if compared to the above mentioned states, slows down the procedures initiated by Romania in view of the integration of Moldavia within the communitarian structures (Blajan, 2010).

Due to its economic importance in the Black Sea Area, Romania shall employ a foreign policy of cooperation focusing on the development of energetic and transportation corridors capable of establishing economic and commercial connections between the

Pontic Area and the European Community, using and enhancing its geographical potential offered by its maritime and fluvial harbours.

Conclusions

It is visible that the impact of globalization has caused Poland and Romania to become more and more important political actors in the Eastern Europe (Poland) and Central and Southern Europe (Romania). In a more nuanced formulation, we may affirm that by sustaining the partnership with the EU and NATO, but also due to the insurgence of a powerful pro-American movement, Romania developed rapidly in the last years, reinforcing its geopolitical and geostrategic position. The strategic interest of the Romanian state to assert itself as a vector of security and prosperity in the Extended Black Sea Area, determined a series of constructive actions such as: mediations, cooperation, agreements, partnerships. These allowed Romania to become an element of stability in the near vicinity of the Western Balkans, rendering our country an important partner, next to Austria, Germany and Hungary, as well as an asset in the European scenarios involving the Danube. Romania maintains institutionalized dialogue and collaboration with its neighbouring countries, riverain to the Black Sea, and especially with Turkey and Bulgaria, succeeding in sustaining successfully its economic interest in the region. Since the Black Sea is located in the midst of the interference zone between Europe, Middle East and Asia Minor, the Romanian state is directly involved in the Euro-Asian transit of hydrocarbons (oil, gas), through economic agreements and partnerships (i.e. the Nabucco agreement, the Constanța-Trieste Pipeline) which reinforce its energetic stability and security. Much more, Romania is the country with the richest energy resources within the Central and South-East European context. Its orientation towards NATO, the EU and the USA, its constant sustainment of a national security strategy with impact on the regional and European geopolitics, as well as its constant contributions to the neighbourhood policy, render the Romanian state an adequate contestant for the role and title of regional power.

Romania's assets which prompts it to be a regional power within the Black Sea basin and South-East Europe, shall undoubtedly be enhanced as consequence to its confirmation as a military, naval and economic power within the region.

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The European Idea: Central and Eastern European Perspective

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Abstract: The interwar period is highlighted at European level through certain projects that are shaped by the continental unification, mainly as a reply to the worldwide war, through promoters such as Kalergi, Briand or Tardieu. In the central and eastern area, these ideas reverberate themselves and receive echo in initiatives such as the Little Entente or the Balkan agreement. Romania plays a catalyst role in all these initiatives, and, moreover, suggests, through the voices of ministers Maniu, Madgearu or Mironescu, the issuance of continental unification projects that find their place in the European debate of the epoch.

Keywords: Little Entente, Balkan Pact, Briand Plan, Romanian configurations

1. Regional atmosphere

Throughout its configurations, the interwar epoch represents a moment of clarification for the European history, and also an impulse for what we call today the modern European construction. Through the projects of European elites such as Kalergi, Briand or Tardieu, and through the adjustments and agreements in Ententes and local coalitions, the future united Europe is drawn during this timeline. The Central and South-Eastern area was not far away from these debates and presented, through initiatives such as the Little Entente or the Balkan Agreement plans for an administrative territorial unifications, which, sometimes served as valid example for Western Europe.

In this entire constellation, Romania and its local partners and political elites played a binding part both at regional and continental level. Through the efforts to accomplish the Little Entente and the Balkan Agreement and then through the founding role in the Briand

project and the part that N. Titulescu played within the Nations' Society, Romania, along with its neighbor countries, confirms the European belonging and even expresses unifying models with its representatives. Consequently, the analysis of the regional South-Eastern dialogue that is then inserted in the debate of the epoch may show routes of the continental integrative dialogue, and also a potential and necessary reevaluation of the part played by this region. Through the frequency of debates and initiatives in this part of Europe, the countries and peoples in the area were then an integrative part of the continental concert, something that only some of them manage to do today.

After a European century of building the „nation states” and after a war with tragical consequences, all announced through the so-called ideology of the „European decline” in Oswald Spengler's work, the European intellectual elite enters a febrile phase that was concerned with the common European destiny. More plans, societies and continental and regional unification projects, which grants the new century a new paneuropean preoccupation, following a XIXth century of national accomplishments. In various formulas, almost all the national states, especially the newly configured ones, enter this concert, and Romania, in its turn, even manages to play founding roles in these constructions. Through its intellectual elite, our country manifests intensely on a European plan, being recognised especially due to its great public names that represented its name. And this was not a random thing, as long as the great majority of the Romanian intellectuals, aspired by the political class, came via European formation routes and had accessed, therefore, the same schools with the European intellectual elites.

Therefore, the interwar debate referring to the European unification had, in its times, a serious partner in this side of the continent, reference made to Romania and its representatives in intercontinental relations. If one were to sequentially remember the main European unification projects in this period, promoted by Kalergi, Briand or Tardieu, one could name Romanian personalities such as V. Madgearu, G.G. Mironescu, N. Titulescu or Iuliu Maniu, who promptly positioned our country on the routes of these projects. It suffices to remember that in the Briand plan, Romania acted, through its representatives, a part of founding country in a conjuncture in which the president of the Nations Society Association was N. Titulescu, a Romanian whose name relates to the history itself of the entire organisation. „The president of the Association, read the resolution project that the French government lodged, on behalf of 45 delegates (September 17th 1930), by which the

governments of the European states were invited to follow the inquiry initiated through Briand memorandum, finishing the proposals of the Nations Society Association.”¹

The feverishness of the manifestations occurring on the international scene of the Romanian representatives was actually a logical result of the great transformations through which Romania had passed at a national level. The interwar epoch represented, and we claim this allegation in the thesis, the creative maturity stage of a social class segment –the intellectual elite-, which, throughout a century had put its print over the rhythm of development and modernisation of the country. „Some foreign observers called Romania-in the beginning of the XXth century „Belgium of the East” sau „The European Japan”. This was not surprising, The pace of development ranked Romania far from the other south-west countries, which Romania outnumbered both in surface and population.”²

By and large, we assume the thesis according to which the message of the Romanian inter-war public figures was one of pro-European essence. We have shown, at a proper time, that the return towards autochtonism tendency itself was one of European cultural nature. From this point until the assumption of the consequent pro-Europeanism of the inter-war Romanian debate, there is a short distance. With public figures shaped in the European cultural space, with behaviours adequate to the European intelligentsia, all in a Latin cultural fund, common to most European cultures, the Romanian message suited the gernal borders of the European cultural debate.

In conclusion, we can ascertain, along with other historics of the epoch, that the inter-war period in Romania was one of continuing the modernisation effort initiated in the XIXth century. And the imposed landmark, especially of a country that had to report to such a model (as long as the peripheric geographic positioning towards the cultural emission centre gave birth to time gap) was permanently the European one, of the developed country in the Western part of the continent.

Starting from the premise ascertained in the first part of the paper, according to which the XXth century was the century of federalist projects, this happening after the XIXth century being one of national movements, we can only observe the affiliation of the Romanian elite to this natural flow. And if we were to mention simply the „Little Entente”

¹ George Ciorănescu, *Românii și ideea federalistă*, Encyclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1996, p. 115;

² Gheorghe Iacob, *Istoria României – compendiu*, The Romanian Cultural Institute, Cluj-Napoca, 2004, p.552;

and the „Balkan Pact”, the position taken by Romania in the Briand Project or the play N. Titulescu acted at the Nations’ Society, it would be sufficient to confirm our thesis. At ideational level, the only aspect to be emphasized remains that the Romanian intellectual elites, such as Iuliu Maniu, Take Ionescu or Virgil Madgearu projected themselves European unification hypostases, with which they actually adhered to the preoccupations of the European elites of the time.

Starting either from regional interests of coalition for the peace keeping, or from continental preoccupations and of representation for the country at an European level, the Romanian initiatives to coagulate some inter or super statal, which will constitute a future study, were inscribed therefore in the general European interwar base lines of intellectual debate. Through the patterns of the regional „agreements” in which our country was an active element, the Romanian intellectuals represented an European behaviour landmark for their foreign brothers. „The Balkan Pact constituted, throughout all the years of the passive activity of the four allied states, an extremely vivacious example, showing the role and the contribution, not deprived of meaning, brought by these small and middle states in the battle for the defense of security, for the protection of peace; (...) it revealed the old friendship traditions and the common battle of the people in the region, by showing the values and their unshakable connections, values and connections that asserted and will always assert in this European space with benign permanence.”³ Then, through the opening proven towards the paneuropean plans, the intellectual elite in Romania constituted itself in a coagulant element of the general debate, through the open way of touching these initiatives. „In an interview granted to the „Neue Freie Presse” newspaper in 1930, when one intensely discussed A. Briand’s plan of the European federation, Maniu proves to be a partisan of a regional federation, as a first step towards the accomplishment of a general European federation, and the proposal of a central-European nucleus, which would include Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Greece and Romania.”⁴

Having, therefore the historical and cultural premises readily shaped, one only has to observe and confirm the acculturation phenomenon to which our country was submitted. After more than a century of intensified contact with the European West, both by intellectual elite and the historic-economic mixtures, in which all the institutional and

³ Eliza Campus, *Înțelegerea Balcanică*, Acad. RSR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1972, XXIV;

⁴ George Ciorănescu, op.cit, p. 124;

national models were of European nature(the revolution of Pasoptism, the first Romanian Constitution, the national-statal building through he two Unions), Romania was actually a state deeply connected to the realities and the European phenomena. By the initiatives that concerned the European future, the intellectual elite of the country confirms it, its continuous effort to modernise the country being the valid proof in this respect. And all these aspects, fundamental to the country's evolution in these hsitorial moments, provide sufficient arguments to support the rebirth of the European myth, through the models offered by Western Europe in our country. The active participation of the country, through its intellectual elites, to the debate refering to the common European future shows that Romania has turned, from spectator into actor and author in the great central European dialogue. The assimilation-adaptation phenomenon, as Lovinescu has seen it, of the European culture was nearly accomplished, and the configuration one has already become a garanted historical accomplishment.

At a central European level, a few initiatives are representative for the pro-European debate. In the array of articulations in the discussion circle that comprised Kalergi's pan-European project or Tardieu's Danubian Configuration, of maximum significance is Briand's Project for a European Union. As it will be shown, the mentioned project is a proof of complexity, especially at the institutional level it managed to raise the debate. Consequently, we consider Briand's vision as a peak of the debate for the European unification and therefore an important moment by the positioning itself that the states invited to adhere forwarded to the commission in charge. The reference to Briand plan can offer through the registered configurations an image both comprising and eloquent for the pulse of the epoch.

2. Briand plan and its role in regional debate

For the interwar period, regarded from the perspective of debating the common European future, the Briand Project of creating a European Union stands as a landmark from two points of view: firstly, due to the fact that it introduced in the debate a significant number of countries, to which Russia and Turkey also attached, and secondly due to the exact steps in the initiation and actual support of this attempt.

The positioning themselves of the states participating in the debate, as a consequence of the Briand Memorandum, reflect the situation in which Europe was located at that time. Be them of complete adherence, of conditioned confirmation or of reserved acceptance, the official responsibilities of the member states make a historiographical basis worthy of interpretation for nowadays Europeanists.

Throughout the accomplished steps and through its novel formula of intergovernmental cooperation in specific issues, all under the juridical umbrella of the Nations' Society, the Briand Plan is undoubtedly among the European unification initiatives that created the suitable ideological space for nowadays „modern European construction.” Acknowledged in a period that was historically problematic, in its resettling after the first World War, but also in the initial configuration of the new forces in Central Europe, the Briand Plan is constituted in an institutionalized initiative of attracting the debate at a superior level, placed above the immediate interests to issue claims of regional influence by the Great Powers of the time.

In fact, through the commissions initiated by Briand, the interest in maintaining peace in the Nations' Society received an extra impulse, which was at ease with the decision-makers of the times. This is also the reason why N. Titulescu, president of the organization, created the work commission dedicated to Federal Europe, as it was seen by its initiator. In fact, the two persons of the European debate seized the importance of a step dedicated to keeping peace at European level. Consequently, through the later matched between powers, history never hesitated in proving that peace would have been the only defensible objective in that period of time, and the steps supporting the European unification could have been the suitable means.

Therefore, regardless where prehistory of the European construction begins, considering the Greek and Roman civilization, and continuing with the crusades or other regional unification forms, the European history allows a unitary interpretation under the spectrum of the tendencies to form a joint future. Along with the advancement towards the twentieth century, the idea of ensuring peace has become more and more stringent, and the entrance in the great century also makes room for the premises to this idea. Not randomly, thus, in the inter-war period, several projects, culminating with the Briand Project, are given shape, configuring, in turn, a recent history of the great postwar construction.

The European Unification Briand Project enters such steps at the end of the third decade of the twentieth century, only that, in accordance to the historiography of the entire project, its forms and implementation methods were shaped both according to the continental history, and to the situation of the exact moment of its affirmation. „A transposition of another concept of unified Europe was also attempted firstly in the interwar period, through the Briand project of European Unification.”⁵ The signaled aspect is essential, especially since it outlines both perspectives. Firstly, the historical one, which determined, along with the XXth century, that any other type of European unification has flunked the test of project validity. Europe has already lived, starting with Hesiod, more than twenty centuries of unification attempts be them by force, or based on a religious principle. Their epoch was already exceeded, and this was even more obvious in the moment the Briand Project was affirmed.

The second perspective in which the current project may be viewed, that of the historical situation of the moment, comes to invalidate the validity of unification by force (we are 10 years distance from the end of the First World War), but especially to confirm the necessity to find a European balance that can ensure continental peace. „There are in fact, certain question of particular interest to Europe for which, in the interests of peace itself, the European states may feel the need of special, more immediate and more direct action, and with which they are, moreover, especially competent to deal, because of their racial affinities and their common ideals of civilization.”⁶

The discussed period, the end of the 30s, is an extremely complicated one at European level. Once the end of the First World War occurred, which also lead to the disappearance of the great empires, national states begin to affirm on the European stage. The system was, nevertheless, agreed upon by the Peace Treaties in Paris-Versailles. Most countries, especially those defeated after the war were ceaselessly trying to revise the treaties, so that the mentioned balance was quite precarious. The „Locarno” moment, 1925, further tightened the European spirits, especially that for the small countries it was quite obvious that the treaty spirit posed no barrier whatsoever to interwar revisionism. In the meanwhile, one could observe that the general atmosphere had become tensed, especially

⁵ Simion Costea, *România și proiectul Briand de Uniune Europeană*, „Petru Maior” University Publishing House, Târgu-Mureș, 2004, p. 25;

⁶ Briand Memorandum;

after Italy had signed on the 5th of September 1926 a commercial treaty with Hungary, on the 27th November 1926 the Tirana Pact has been signed and on April 4th 1927 a friendship treaty was signed with Hungary.”⁷

To all these political-administrative aspects, the great economic-financial crisis of the end of the 30s is added. This aspect must be mentioned, especially from the perspective that historiography consider to have played a vital role in the final failure of the Briand plan. This juxtaposition, between an intergovernmental step aiming for the opening, reciprocal dialogue and common measures in distinct problems, and an unprecedented economic crisis that forced the national sovereign states towards a protectionist policy, had unfortunate effects upon the desired finality through European Unification by Briand Project.

Briand’s permanent attempts, to reach common ground put him in the situation of underlining the need to maintain European peace, to strive for the economic correlation of the European states, to keep the new unionist configuration under the auspices of the Nations’ Society and, generally, to avoid any potential internal tension, an aspect confirmed by the Romanian representatives at the session in September 1929, through the voice of the Minister Antoniadă, as member of the Romanian delegation in Geneva. „Mister Briand developed his idea prior to the Assembly of September 11. With much kindness, he referred only to the baselines, avoiding to bring additional information that could give birth to controversies and exposing only ideas accepted by the humanity.(...) By a resolution signed by 45 delegates and adopted without discussions by the Assembly, the principle of union and accomplishment within the Nations’ Society was approved, inviting the European States that, in collaboration with the Secretariat and in its quality as Society’s Commission, to continue the investigation and to present to the future Assembly a report of the results, following precise proposals.”⁸

With an institutional structure that was true to that of the Nations’ Society, within which it was also functioning, (made of the European Conference, the European Committee and the Secretariat), Briand limited his project of European Unification to a conception as elementary as possible, but he made this out of practical reasons, namely, to

⁷ Eliza Campus, *Mica Înțelegere*, Romanian Academy Publishing House, Bucharest, 1997, p. 95;

⁸ Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, fond 71, vol.22, fila 47-48;

increase the chances of a common feeling for a concrete first proposal, and to reconcile all the interests and particular situations.”⁹

Permanently returning to the European situation, and, during the 1929-1930 even to the global one, in which the economic crisis was harshly felt, and the states were looking for safeguarding solutions in the natural intentions of the protectionist policies within their own borders, we may place the essential moment of the Briand Project in this period that was politically and economically eventful. Once the Memorandum and the special secretariat were formed within the Committee for the European Union, Aristide Briand took over the official task of formulating a questionnaire based on the Memorandum, addressed to the countries of the 27 European Countries, which had to answer until the 15th July 1930. „The received answers may be separated under two sections: of the states that adhered entirely to the Memorandum’s proposals, such as France and the countries of the Little Entente and the answers of the governments that have political and economical reserves, such as Germany and Hungary.”¹⁰ Otherwise, and this aspect has been mentioned beforehand, the governments’ positioning at the Briand Memorandum accurately reflected the intentions and projections of each of them regarding strategies and national visions within the European complex.

The main allies of the Briand Project, precisely for geopolitical reasons, were the representatives of the countries that signed the Little Entente, respectively Romania, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. Positioned in Central Europe, all these countries were interested that, throughout regional ententes, they would ensure the integrity and economic security, but especially the territorial one in front of the post-Versailles revisionist claims.” The history of the Central European organization (Little Entente) proves, from the very beginning, that even during the First World War, this idea of a federal-zonal form of cohabitation occurred, as expression of private interests of the component parties.”¹¹ Consequently, a country such as Romania, whose answer will be used, sends a trust signal in Briand’s initiative, in diplomatic terms; this answer stands as example in the category of countries that adhere entirely to the future European project, especially by the issued signature, after the mentioned premises. „Le Gouvernement Roumain décidé a participer à

⁹ Simion Costea, op.cit., p. 61;

¹⁰ Ciorănescu, op.cit., pp. 113-114;

¹¹ Elisa Campus, op.cit., p. 10;

la Conference qui doit se reunir, à Genève, en Septembre, au moment de l'Assemblée Générale de la Société des Nations, se réserve d'examiner alors les suggestions concrètes du Mémorandum ainsi que les propositions qui seraient faites par d'autres Gouvernements."¹² Using therefore predictable terms, it transmits the essential message of participating in the next conference regarding the European Union. And the last phrase of the answer comes nonetheless as an emphasis on the relevance of the monument. „Il est convaincu que le projet d'union fédérale proposé par le Gouvernement Français marquera le commencement d'une ère nouvelle dans la vie internationale. La réalisation graduelle de ce projet établissent une collaboration civilisée, un avenir de fraternité et de bonheur."¹³

Returning to the thesis according to which, along with the answers to the Briand Memorandum, the states had the opportunity to clarify their options regarding unified Europe, we will signal only the Romanian Ambassador's in London note, regarding the situation in Great Britain. Not randomly, as, along with the signal sent by the British government, we also signal the category of reserved answers regarding Briand's United Europe Project. „Because of England's special status, which, as an essential element of the British Empire, has extremely important extra-European connections, the answer to the Briand Memorandum couldn't have but a preliminary character."¹⁴ From various reasons, therefore, not all countries gave unconditional credit to the Briand Project." In the political centers and in public opinion, the Briand Memorandum is generally viewed with a dose of skepticism, if not with indifference. Many persons are even completely opposed to England's entrance in a federal Europe, because this might constitute a new „commitment to continental business."¹⁵ In the same register of reserved answers, Germany also maintains distance from the unionist project, especially since it was in that period that Minister Stresemann, Briand's main German partner, died. „For the Berlin officials and for the German public opinion, the priorities order was simple: firstly, they had to revise treaties and reinstate political, economical and military power of Germany, and then there was still time to discuss an eventual European organization."¹⁶

¹² AMFA, fond 71, vol. 22, f. 463-474;

¹³ Ibidem;

¹⁴ Ibidem, f. 110;

¹⁵ Ibidem, f. 111;

¹⁶ Simion Costea, op.cit., p. 66;

Even from the beginning of our conclusions, one must notice the fact that, in its times, the Briand project represented the highest level of European construction proposed to the 27 European states. „In the spirit of the epoch’s mentalities, for which national sovereignty was a sacrosanct dogma, Briand projected an intergovernmental European Union, conceived on the sovereignty of national states. It was a Europe of states and a directorial Europe, which foreran (in a certain way) Charles de Gaulle’s formula.”¹⁷ The debates between national and supranational, federative and confederative, union and unity, all found their moment in the European history, being placed in the center and thus preparing the postwar debates that led to the building of contemporary European Union.

From the same level of the relevance of the Project Briand vision, we signal the French Minister’s concern with peace, objectively put at the basis of the European unification project, as previously signaled in the paper. Moreover, Briand had correctly intuited, and this becomes visible after the Second World War, that the balance necessary for keeping European peace may begin to establish peace between France and Germany. „From this conversation (between A. Briand and the Romanian Ambassador in Paris, Diamandy) I understood, says our Minister in Paris, that he (Briand) makes the French-German connections the core of the European countries’ expansion.”¹⁸ And from this perspective, the Briand Project stands, as major antecedent, at the creation of that prehistory for European construction which evolved, naturally and necessarily, towards nowadays unifying model.

But perhaps the most important light sent by the Briand Project to posteriori is the stage itself that it represents. If we were to call it the interwar period, with its three projects, (Kalergi, Briand, Tardieu) the recent prehistory of the European construction, the Briand Project is here as the most laborious moment lived. Beyond its practical aspects, intergovernmentalism based on institutions that mirrored those of the Nations’ Society, the Briand Project represents a stage in the collective mental without which nowadays European Union would be poorer. Throughout its concern for peace, through the proposed proximity between France and Germany, as well as through the intergovernmental economic collaboration, the Briand Project becomes a historic stage, logically consistent and necessary for the modern European construction.

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 63;

¹⁸ AMFA, fond 71, vol. 22, f. 64;

3. Regional Configurations

Motto:” After the First World War three empires had disappeared: the German, the Austrian and the Russian empire. The guardian of the new European order and peace treaties had remained the French-Anglo-American alliance and the Nations’ Society. But the Society will soon expose its political inefficiency.” G.Cioranescu

3.1. Little Entente

With a precise history, starting back in the 1920s, through a Czech-Yugoslavian treaty, then through the Czech-Romanian and Romanian-Yugoslavian, the Little Entente proves to be from the very beginning a defensive alliance doubled by three military conventions. Interested in protecting the Trianon treaties, the tripartite conventions respected the principles of the Nations’ Society Pact, which referred to maintaining continental peace. Following joint external politics, the Little Entente was supposed to ensure Central Europe’s peace throughout the guarantee of the territorial integrity of the states in this area. “The defensive character of the Little Entente was manifested by its consistent support of disarmament and international agreements to outlaw war as a means of settling disputes.(....) They showed their determination to maintain the status quo by opposing all forms of territorial revision-the restoration of the Habsburgs, the idea of Mitteleuropa, and the Anschluss.”¹⁹

The main objective of the signing states consists in keeping the border as originally sketched after the First World War. And in order to get a wider recognition, the initiators of the Little Entente, ministers E.Benes, T.Ionescu and M.Nimcic are seeking to attract Greece and Poland within the Entente. In such a five-state organization, the Little Entente would have clearly represented a much stronger voice both in the region and the continent. “Take Ionescu’s Oriental Block was supposed to stretch from the Baltic Sea to the Aegean

¹⁹ Keith Hitchins, *Rumania 1866-1947*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994, p.431;

Sea and would have become, along with its 75 million inhabitants, one of the main European powers."²⁰

In its nearly two- decade history, the Little Entente reflects first and foremost an essential aspect of its configuration: the initiation of this entente, as well as its entire evolution issued from own initiative of the signing states and didn't follow an external attached plan. In other words, the Little Entente represents a regional project, put into practice by the own force of the signing states, hence its value in the inter-war period.

Having experience the Great Economic Crisis of 1929-1933, the Little Entente entered 1933 upon the birth of the Economic Council and "t he initiation of a joint economic plan, according to which a rate-setting was imposed in agriculture, industry, communications and arms domain."²¹

All these intercessions were meant to strengthen collaboration among some states actually interested in protecting their security and peace, especially that at European level there were obvious intentions for a new conflagration. The economic relation had to become therefore closely knit, and the decision-makers used this and the Tardieu Plan: "In the agrarian problem, the minutes of the sessions (from Prague, the 1st of June) indicates coming back of the thesis contained in Tardieu Plan. Regarding preferential tariffs."²²

In the same timeline, and by the same aims, there was also a discussion about the armed collaboration as necessary, with the creation of a joint major and better integrated state. At the same time, there was a passage to the initiation of a joint alliance politics with the states around the Little Entente, in view of ensuring one of the best defenses. With 1936, the right to use force on the European stage becomes more and more visible in inter-state politics. Between 1937-1938 the Little Entente shreds apart, not because private causes, but under the influence of the Great Power (it was already a fifth European power and represented too big of a danger), especially throughout the unilateral treaties imposed on the three countries.

Through the model it offered, at regional level, of interstate collaboration, and especially through the agreements in the economic field, it can be said that the Little Entente circulated ideas and concepts for a potential federal organization, which were

²⁰ G. Cioranescu, op.cit, p.101;

²¹ E.Campus, *Mica Inteligere*, pp 12-13;

²² Ibidem, p.127;

visible and encouraging for the epoch debate. The economic integration model in particular later shows that it is the solution for starting a European unifying intercession, a model that the three states had already started to apply among themselves.

3.2. The Balkan Pact

As in the case of the Little Entente, the main objective of the Balkan Pact was the need of the states in the region for security. The year 1930 represented an occasion for Germany to reaffirm its conception regarding Mittleuropa and the “Berlin-Baghdad Axis”, so that the joining states felt threatened. Moreover, it was the second year in the global economic crisis and the states saw in their economic collaboration a potential rescue chance. It was in the same year that Aristide Briand presented his plan regarding the European Union and the initiators of the Balkan Pact saw there a suitable environment for their strategy. Consequently, both initiatives evolve, especially that some states in the Balkan Pact saw in the Briand Plan an opportunity to lose from its own sovereignty. “In such surroundings, the birth of a regional cooperation seemed even more useful, based on clauses that established full equality and sovereignty of the binding parties.”²³

Stemming from an economic approach to the crisis, some states were hoping this way to make progress regarding the political agreements. To start discussions and session, a first Balkan Conference was suggested, for October 1930, where the participants were Turkey, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania and Yugoslavia. Without any specific notable results, the interstate meeting open the way of the dialogue and for some treaties that handles historic problems among participants, such as the unblocking of the Greek-Turk pact.

In the meanwhile, in 1931, the two dangers (German expansionism and the economic crisis) were getting deeper and deeper, which brings the Balkan leaders to suggest a pact that refers first of all to reciprocal self-defense. “Only after the accomplishment of this pact, could one consider that a decisive step was taken towards a potential organization of a Balkan Union.”²⁴ Among the objectives, there was a chain of

²³ E.Campus, *Înțelegerea Balcanică*, p. 56;

²⁴ Ibidem, p. 67;

states that could have connected Western Europe and the other nations in the Mediterranean Sea, thus, the organization gained geopolitical weight.

In the second Balkan Conference (October 1931), the commission work starts, with the political field aiming the bringing of the states closer in order to defer any litigation and to defend reciprocally, both aspects showing the necessity of a pact in this respect. In these moments, both Romania and Yugoslavia had an ascendant in the experience within the Little Entente regarding the treaties about the defense of their territorial integrity.

Along with the third Conference, new discussions occur on the board, referring to Customs union between states, which would ease the reciprocal commercial relation and would automatically bring towards an economic and deep collaboration.

As a natural follow-up of the interstate conferences that took place on the 9th of February 1934, four of the six states-Greece, Yugoslavia, Turkey and Romania sign the Balkan Pact as an instrument designed to keep the territorial status-quo of the signing states against any aggression, in view of a collective solidarity. Followed-in 193 and later-by military pacts between states and by economic agreements, as well as by joint positions on the international scene, looking for a balance (an Oriental Pact was also in view between the Balkan Pact and Russia), the Balkan Pact followed its trajectory close to the six states, even with Bulgaria and Albania, even until during the war, when, forced after its occupation, Romania left the Pact firstly, and the other states could no longer respect its liabilities.

Throughout the connections issued between the region's states, through the solidarity and the aimed economic aspects, the Balkan Pact is among the unification initiatives to forge a regional European unification that creates an epoch-specific accomplishment.

4. Individual configurations

4.1. The Maniu Plan for an European configuration

Iuliu Maniu was Prime Minister of Romania for three periods between 1928 and 1933, as well as president of the National Peasants' Party, for which reason his projects gained significance and legitimacy. His concern for agriculture and the population

employed in this domain made him conceive a plan for the entire European area where agriculture was major in the economy of the specific states.

In the European plan there are two auspices under which Maniu governs Romania: the great European crisis and the Briand Project occurrence on the European stage. Taking this into account, along with the general tensed circumstances, Iuliu Maniu tried, through the support of a co federal plan regarding Europe, to find answers to all the problems they were facing.

From the very beginning, one must say that Maniu's standpoint towards the Briand Plan is interpreted from this perspective. "As Prime Minister, Maniu became a name in the external politics both through the support of the Briand Plan for the European Union as well as through the promotion of a private conception of Central-Southern=Eastern and Pan-European Confederation"²⁵ One must mention that the first affirmations of his ideas for European integration were noticed from 1924, and the need of such a project came to Maniu even from 1918, when he realized that the new frontiers of the country had to be defended in a larger alliance. Due to this reason, Maniu, the political man, supported the Little Entente and the consequence that Romania should follow integration in an alliance system supported by economic agreements for the agrarian profile of the South-Eastern European area. Stemming from the idea of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire as complete economic space, Maniu was after the recovery and integration into a larger economic space, with Romania in the middle and with Hungary's attachment which would thus give up the revisionist claims, especially since the relevance of national boundaries would have weighed less in importance in such a confederacy.

Convinced that after the creation of national states follows their integration through a European union, Maniu imposed the program at the level of the external politics in Romania. This integrative plan consisted of no less than eight countries: Romania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Albania, Austria, Hungary and Poland, countries that should have started with the signing of preferential economic agreements for reciprocal support. As a matter of fact, within the official answer of the Romanian Government to the Briand Memorandum, Maniu wanted to show the need of the economic integration, a vision he tried to apply through ministers Madgearu, Mironescu and Titulescu, pursuing the issuance of "Agrarian Countries' Bloc":²⁶ This bloc was presented

²⁵ S. Costea, op.cit., p.78;

at the Nations' Society as a pragmatic method to accomplish the European Union Briand presented, as pillar of the great construction."²⁶

The construction of the Briand Project suggested two stages: firstly, a Central-European Confederacy among the mentioned states, and only then an evolution towards a Pan-European construction. The first stage was, in its turn, supposed to have four steps: firstly, an economic alliance, then a boundary union, then an integration for the armed forces, and in the end bodies and joint institutions to ensure the keeping of sovereignty for the participant states.

Many of the Maniu Plan aspects were therefore juxtaposed over those in Briand Plan, an explainable fact, especially due to the circulation of the epoch's ideas, and that between the two politicians there were several meetings. The idea to start from an economic agreement or the keeping of the sovereignty was essential principles of the two projects. Once the Briand Plan fell, Maniu was happy to see his ideas recaptured in the Tardieu Plan of Danubian Configuration. Throughout this project, predominantly economic and especially regional, Maniu saw his ideas confirmed regarding the first stage necessary his own plan, that to create a regional confederation.

With the passing of the years, when Europe spoke less of integration projects, Maniu retakes his ideas in a speech in 1937, when he took over the president position of the National Peasants' Party. Through the attempt and insistence in the Pan-European ideal, through the official or indirect dialogue with the European elites, Iuliu Maniu enters the list of precursors for the contemporary European integration, especially since history later validated his ideas and those belonging to his contemporaries.

4.2. Virgil Madgearu and the economic Federacy of South-Eastern Europe

Economist, PhD from Leipzig University, V. Madgearu sat next to Maniu during the governments between 1928 and 1933. According to his background and his tasks in the government (Economy Minister), Madgearu was mostly concerned about the European economic problem, showing a strong vision and a will for integration.

As in Maniu's case, Madgearu's vision comes in 1924, when he joins Coudenhove-Kalergi's idea of Pan Europe, along with the political elites from Europe, such as Edouard

²⁶ Ibidem, p.87;

Herriot, A.Briand, Churchill, Amery, Pal Teleki or Romanians such as Titulescu, Mironescu etc. From an economist's perspective, the first reason for unification as the better correlation of the continent's economies and their consolidation in front of the global competition, in this case, the European economy vs. the American competition. From this perspective, Madgearu was choosing the inter-state collaboration on the continent" and instead of the idea of nationalism as unique and guiding factor in the social action, one must awaken the international spirit of understanding and cooperation between all the peoples of the world."²⁷

Faithful to his own belief, Madgearu joins Briand's vision, especially that he was part of the Romanian Government during that period. He also managed to create The Agrarian States Bloc, which he later represented in front of the Nations' League.

"In his official speech held in front of the Nations' League Assembly, the Romanian minister strongly supported the interests of the Agrarian States Bloc in the larger framework of Romania's strategy towards a staged pan-European integration"²⁸ Stemming from the demarcation between the predominantly agrarian states and the industrial ones in Europe, Madgearu proved that an integrated agrarian politics was necessary for a European Union within the Nations' League." Madgearu wished that the European Federacy would insist on this type of pan-European agreement, not political, because only by an economic agreement method could it have led to the transformation of the European idea into a reality."²⁹

For its integrative vision, for the building of the Agrarian Bloc and for the support of European unification projects, V. Madgearu deserves his place in the gallery of this creed's supporters, especially since he supported the primacy of the economic field over the political one, this being the real dialogue maker of the time.

With an entire series of political elites of the time, such as I.Maniu, V.Madgearu, T.Ionescu, G.Mironescu or N.Titulescu, and with cultural elites among whom E.Lovinescu, N.Bagdasar or D.Gusti, Romania enters the choir of inter-war debates, which referred to the integration and unification in Europe. This way, our country, along with

²⁷ V. Madgearu in the study *"Imperialismul economic si Liga Natiiunilor"* in *Politica externa a Romaniei*, coord. Dimitrie Gusti, Bucurest, 1924, pp.54-83;

²⁸ N. Păun, coord, *Actualitatea mesajului fondatorilor Uniunii Europene*, EFES, Cluj-Napoca, 2006, p.306

²⁹ S.Costea, op.cit., p.105;

others countries in the region and their elites, represents an equal partner facing the European joint future, proving that ideas circulate especially when ideals are common at continental level.

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What happened to the “Greek Miracle”?

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Abstract: The purpose of this research is to analyse the validity of the expression The Greek Miracle, utilised in a purely economic sense, which gained popularity in the 1950s and afterwards, while apparently lacking concrete arguments to uphold it. The manifestations of this alleged miracle are therefore traced throughout a historical timeline ranging from the reconstruction of the Greek economy following the Second World War with the adoption of the Marshall Plan, to the military junta regime and all the way to present day. Hence, it becomes a priority to link the abovementioned economic evolution to the distressing phenomenon of the sovereign debt crisis and its intricate manifestations within the Greek economy. The effects of a series of policies dating back to the miraculous period of time are set against the background of the current status of the Greek economy, with the help of comparative research methods and the support of up-to-date publications.

Keywords: Greece, economic crisis, debt, bailout, Eurozone.

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It is unquestionable that the economic progress of Greece across the last one hundred years is a phenomenon worth investigating, in order to attempt to reach the roots of the current downturn and its particular manifestations in this country. Present attitudes range widely from an overly critical approach to the current situation of Greece within the larger context of the European sovereign debt crisis to the support for this country's citizens, in the sense of absolving part of their responsibility for the highly unstable situation. While not having any intention of placing blame, the present article aims to shed light on the nature of the financial crisis in Greece at this time, by resorting to a historical insight into key aspects that are worthy of remembrance and the plethora of attitudes, positions and measures taken at the national and European level with regard to the potential default of this country. Hence, it is our objective to uncover the potential existence of a cause - effect liaison of the events that have led to the current worrying state of the Greek economy, as well as to review the most pertinent attitudes at present with respect to the implications of this situation for the Eurozone and the European Union taken as a whole. Thus, it should become somewhat easier to comprehend the potentially disturbing separation so often advocated at present between euro and non-euro countries, while assessing the role of Greece in this dichotomy in the years to come.

Without intending to look into the impressive history of the Greek economy, an endeavour that, although insightful, would only be tangentially germane to the purpose of this research, we shall only focus on the growth of this sector over the last century. Therefore, it is to be noted that the economy of Greece, under the auspices of the industrial revolutions, was characterised by a constant pace of progress, which enabled this country to fall into the category of developed nations, with a purchase power comparable to those of the best performing states across the European Community. All things considered, this fact has been made possible in Greece, unlike in many of its neighbouring countries, due to the special circumstances surrounding this nation in the aftermath of World War Two. Needless to say, the key aspect pertaining to this post-war progress of Greece has to deal with its inclusion into the Economic Cooperation Act, also known as the Marshall Plan, a massive reconstruction endeavour amongst 17 countries, leading to the creation of the

Organisation for European Economic Cooperation.² The US-orchestrated initiative, baptised after Secretary of State George Marshall, did little to conceal its goal of containing the perilous spread of Communism across Europe, even in Western countries, while fostering the restart of the Europe's economic engines.

Whilst East-European nations, under the pressure of the newly-settled Iron Curtain and the oppressive invasion of internal policies by the Soviet Union had little choice but to reject the reconstruction plan, as in the case of Romania, through the voice of Gheorghe Tătărăscu, Greece became at the time, along with Turkey, an essential outpost in the struggle of Western allies to contain the scourge of communism. Consequently, given the failure of the British Government to subsidise the internal fight against an ever more aggressive communist political wing, the USA chose to deploy the first significant financial assistance package in the two abovementioned countries, at the beginning of 1947. With a total of around 380 million dollars allocated for Greece until 1951³, it appears the aid was consistent enough and well distributed, so as to give rise to a phenomenon that tends to be disregarded at present, boldly referred to as the *Greek miracle*. While the economic growth and subsequent prosperity lasted for more than two decades, the aforementioned name is, in our view, not entirely justified, all the more because its popularity within the Greek state is far less consistent than it might be expected.

The reasons why such a name should be regarded with a somewhat ambivalent attitude are multiple, but it suffices to point at the highly unstable political climate of Greece in the 30 years following the defeat of Nazi Germany. Given the Axis' subjugation of the economy, its severe transformations to serve the purpose of the War and the inherent sabotage by the extremely active resistance movement, the end of the hostilities led Greece to a four-year long civil war. The emergence of the Truman doctrine meant that the USA had little choice but to support an authoritarian government in Greece, the only one that could prevent communists from taking over.⁴ Hence, while the effects of the Marshall Plan were starting to yield results, the increasing suspicion of a communist plot ultimately led to

² Michael J. Hogan, *The Marshall Plan: America, Britain and the Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1947-1952*, Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 143.

³ Mogens Pelt, *Tying Greece to the West: US-West German-Greek Relations 1949-1974*, Museum Tusculanum Press, 2006, p. 71.

⁴ Michael J. Hogan, *op. cit.*, p. 386.

a massive political crisis and, eventually, to the coup d'état from the 21st of April 1967 that brought to power the right-wing regime of the Colonels, otherwise known as the Greek Military Junta. During its seven years in power, the military regime benefitted from the support of the United States, in the context of its anticommunist policy, which remains to this day one of the major embarrassments of the Cold War period for the democratic world.⁵

Thus, albeit the situation of Greece from the point of view of the respect for civil liberties during this period of time was normally incompatible with the values promoted on the western side of the Iron Curtain, the country's economy started thriving, which is why the expression *the Greek miracle* should basically be awarded nothing more than an economic connotation. What happened in fact? The reconstruction plans aimed at undoing the harmful effects of the Second World War, which translated to significant investments in large infrastructure projects, meant to reconstruct or enhance access ways, as well as to reshape the urban environments - although it is arguable whether this remodelling was for the better or whether it gave rise to veritable eyesores. Nevertheless, this is without a doubt an objective that became logically connected to the prioritising of improvements in the tourism sector, which turned into one of the most prominent sources of income for the Government and came hand in hand with the increase in foreign direct investments. At the same time, the effects of growth started to be noticeable in multiple sectors of the Greek economy, ranging from the industrial output, which roughly doubled during the course of the '60s, to the emerging service sector. All in all, this rapid economic boost transformed Greece into one of the best performing countries worldwide, with respect to its annual Gross Domestic Product increase, second only to another state having provided its own definition of what an economic *miracle* should consist of, namely Japan.⁶

On the other hand, the use of the term *miracle* for this particular period of time when referring to the Greek case, while apparently justifiable from an economic viewpoint is once more doubtful when it comes to social criteria. The already proven political instability of Greece at the time is known - and it comes to no surprise - to have had severe consequences on the social order, with an ever more evident division between an increasingly affluent high class and an often stagnating middle and inferior one. Needless

⁵ Mogens Pelt, *op. cit.*, p. 22-24.

⁶ Kalypso Nicolaidis, *The Greek Paradox: promise vs. performance*, MIT Press, 1997, p. 43-44.

to say, this phenomenon was reflected in political options, which only intensified the fears of a return of communists, in spite of the outlawing of their party following its defeat back in 1949 and a reassurance for democratic forces given by the country's inclusion in NATO in 1952.⁷ Therefore, it has been so far demonstrated that the overall economic growth of Greece at that moment, while consistent and encouraging, was not at all deprived of problems.

The collapse of the Military Junta in 1974 left Greece in an insecure economic position, with macroeconomic indices getting out of hand following the political shock and the manifestation of the first decrease in the country's GDP after the Second World War, which would in no way remain singular in the course of the 1980's. In fact, this period was to be marked by a relative stagnation of the Greek economy, compared to its previous growth, although the standard of living was constantly ranked far above the European average.⁸

The most significant event occurring in the '80s which pertains to the topic of our research consists of the integration of Greece in the European Community, which came in 1981⁹, no fewer than five years before that of two western Mediterranean countries, Spain and Portugal. While the economy itself did not grow at a steady rate at that time, since contractions were not entirely uncommon, Greece did maintain a high standard of living; hence the effects of the alleged *Greek miracle* kept making themselves felt. Nevertheless, at the same time, the distressing phenomenon of the black market started gaining new momentum and this led to a situation that the Greek administration has been confronting with ever since.

Given that the subsequent period is not indicative of either any furtherance of the phenomenon submitted to our analysis or any major shocks occurring within the Greek economy, it is our view that the next significant step taken in this respect constitutes the entry of this country into the Eurozone. Having participated in all steps of economic construction, regarded as a progressive process, as well as the implementation of the *acquis communautaire* and reforms enacted by such treaties as the Single European act, followed

⁷ Giannes Koliopoulos, Thanos Veremes, *Greece: the modern sequel: from 1831 to the present*, Hurst & Co. Publishers, 2002, p. 298.

⁸ Kalypso Nicolaidis, *op. cit.*, p. 45-46.

⁹ Richard Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 6.

by the Treaty of Maastricht, Greece pledged its allegiance to a full membership of the European Union and the furtherance of its economic integration. The commitments assumed by means of the two aforementioned reform documents, which gave rise to the creation of the Single European Market and its four freedoms of movement - for goods, services, capital and persons - were decisive for the course of action taken by Greek decision makers in the field of its economy. The country's willingness to meet the so-called Convergence Criteria - also known as the Maastricht Criteria, meant to set the minimum thresholds for joining the next step of European economic integration, namely the creation of the single currency, initiated a controversial course for Athens, which was to range from economic performance to accusations of corruption and forgery.¹⁰

It is no random fact that Greece failed to join the freshly-created Eurozone from the very beginning, like the other 11 states that were able to adopt the Euro firstly as their scriptural currency, in parallel to national ones, starting from the 1st of January 1999. At the time, the Economic and Monetary Union was and remains to date the ultimate step in the process of economic integration of the European Union, in the absence of a genuine fiscal union, consecrated by a treaty. Thus, the compliance to the Convergence Criteria was accepted in 2000, with some reluctance¹¹, as justified by an internal audit ordered by the new Greek administration four years after the event, which revealed what has been known to date as the falsification of macroeconomic indices by the previous Greek government.¹² While the issue itself did not pose any major obstacles in Greece implementing the necessary legislation for the switch to the new currency, given that a single macroeconomic criterion - the budget deficit - ranked above the accepted limit, the psychological effects of such findings did weigh heavily on the country's political class. The entire debate on this matter is not necessarily justified, as the calculation of the minor deviation of budget deficit exhibited by Greece at the time is reliant on the methods used and has yielded different results ever since, all of them close to the accepted limit of 3% of GDP. Needless to say, however, that Greece was not the only newly-admitted member of this form of economic union that became surrounded by suspicion with regard to the

¹⁰ Dionyssis Dimitrakopoulos, *Greece in the European Union*, Routledge, 2004, p. 87-88.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p.128.

¹² Matthew Lynn, *Bust: Greece, the Euro and the Sovereign Debt Crisis*, John Wiley and Sons, 2010, p. 117-118.

compliance with the Maastricht Criteria, as Italy is believed to have had somewhat similar problems. Whether the fact that it is the names of these two countries that are now found amongst the ones experiencing severe setbacks in their economies is connected to the moment we are analysing is a coincidence or not has yet to be proven, albeit it does not appear to be so.

It is against this background that the economic downturn chiefly occurring from the year 2009 onwards in Greece should be taken into account. Its dimension pertinent to sovereign debt is most definitely not surprising in the case of this country, as it has had constant policies reliant on tolerance for massive public debt ever since the collapse of the military regime back in 1974. Moreover, the continuation of some effects germane to the *Greek economic miracle* was made possible due to the consistent financing of social welfare by the successive governments, with the support of increasing debts. The European Union appeared to be excessively tolerant in this regard, given the disregard of the convergence criterion pertaining to public debt, which, under the recommendations of Maastricht, should be kept below the threshold of 60% of GDP both at the time of admission and subsequently. In the case of Greece, neither of the situations was even close to being respected, as worrying increase in the external debt of this nation gave rise to nothing more than feeble reactions from Brussels and the European Central Bank in Frankfurt.

With an external debt ratio of over 100% for almost twenty years, Greece has been using various financial mechanisms in order not to cease its traditional borrowing approach at the international level.¹³ From initial currency devaluations, prior to 2000, to the haven provided by the adoption of an increasingly strong currency - the euro - after that significant moment, the country showed little hesitation in continuing its perilous practice. The idea of what was once justifiably referred to as a *miracle* was gradually starting to fall apart, as macroeconomic figures started indicating a worrying decline at all levels. It is precisely here that the greatest accusations of fault can be cast upon the Greek administration, given the fact that suspicions of falsifying economic reports once more became apparent. The ascending curve of the nation's foreign debt was cushioned by illicit agreements between various governments and such economic global actors as Goldman Sachs, with the latter being paid for the past ten years in order to conceal the real level of

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 70.

Greece's debt.¹⁴ All of this occurred under the allegedly watchful eye of the European Union, whose apparent lack of reaction in this regard remains troubling to this date, all the more because it was becoming obvious that the Greek case, as a member of the Eurozone and amid the economic downturn, would eventually crack open. The domino effect was in no way a newly-advocated concept for Brussels, hence the fault of the EU in this distressing course of events remains one of the certainties within the analysis of the intricate case exhibited by the Greek problem. The uncovering in 2010 of this forgery started an accelerated hammering of nail after nail in the coffin which was to become of George Papandreou's government.

With a budget deficit already exceeding the critical value of 10% in 2009, the Greek economy started convulsing critically, which led to the situation getting out of the government's hand the next year, as public debt neared the outrageously high value of 150% of GDP.¹⁵ For a country belonging to the Eurozone, the macroeconomic figures were - and remain to date - incredibly critical: a decrease in GDP, a two-figure budget deficit and a public debt that most certainly reached alarming levels, all of which could at any time translate to default. The danger of defaulting set a distressing precedent not only within the European Union, but especially the Eurozone itself, which prompted the European Central Bank to take action, by suspending the minimum ratio of Greece's debt. All in all, the greatest concern with regard to a potential default of the country is not purely economic, as the size of Greece's economy is not high enough to inflict considerable damage on the Eurozone, taken as a whole. Nevertheless, it is the psychological effect once again that may be the most detrimental aspect, given the fact that more Mediterranean countries are currently suffering from the high public debt outbreak, all of which partake in the Economic and Monetary Union - Portugal especially, closely followed by Italy.

As far as potential solutions are concerned, it is to be noted the controversy behind the likely creation of Eurobonds, albeit the opposition of Germany, or, just as well, the other answers meant to stabilise the Eurozone by means of a recent (partial) agreement on

¹⁴ Archie Carroll, Ann Buchholtz, *Business and Society: Ethics and Stakeholder Management*, Cengage Learning, 2011, p. 659.

¹⁵ *Greece: Fourth Review Under the Stand-By Arrangement and Request for Modification and Waiver of Applicability of Performance Criteria*, International Monetary Fund, 2011, p. 49.

the strengthening of the European Financial Stability Facility.¹⁶ What is certain, however, is that Greece's problems have to be tackled at an internal level as well, in order to make room for the implementation of the mechanisms decided at the Community level and the prevention of escalation in this crisis. This being said, it is chiefly noticeable the introduction of austerity packages starting from 2010, with the aim of fostering the loan packages negotiations with the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank, totalling 80 billion euros.¹⁷

There are several particularities of such austerity measures exhibited by the Greek administration, if we were to establish comparisons with other EU countries facing the need to implement similar strategies, such as Romania. The severity of the measures, including a mild increase in VAT (by 2%, on average), reductions in bonuses and minor decreases in salaries, was insufficiently harsh to guarantee a solution to the immediate need for funds and paled in comparison to the cuts enacted by the Romanian government at the same levels, for instance. It thus comes to no surprise that, by May 2010, the Greek administration had called for an immediate activation of the European Union's bailout mechanism, followed by a new set of austerity measures taken by Papandreou's executive. Amid violent protests from the part of the population, such measures called for further limitations of bonuses, restructuring in the public sector and administration in particular, as well as changes in retirement age and taxation.¹⁸

While far from being an unbearable austerity package, the proposal by the Greek government did lead to a loan agreement with both the European Union and the International Monetary Fund, meant to ensure sufficient funding for the following three years. With the ghost of the *Greek miracle* fading away or, better yet, altering beyond recognition, the drama - no pun intended - of economic measures continued in 2011, with supplementary property taxes and denationalisation. Divisions amongst members of the Cabinet led to the acknowledgement of a situation that was empirically noticeable, namely that the reform packages were dysfunctional: from VAT controversies to populism and

¹⁶ *OECD Economic Surveys: Greece 2011*, Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, OECD Publishing, 2011, p. 54.

¹⁷ *Analysis: Lenders seen swallowing Greece's 80 bln euro demand*, by Ben Harding, Reuters, 17 Nov. 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/11/17/us-greece-loans-idUSTRE7AG0RE20111117> (accessed on 14th Dec. 2011).

¹⁸ Jonathan Huntley, *Federal Debt and the Risk of a Fiscal Crisis*, DIANE Publishing, 2011, p. 6.

internal attacks, the Government weakened to such a great extent that the resignation of Papandreou on the 10th of November 2011 came to no surprise. The replacement of the Prime Minister with former European Central Bank Vice-President Lucas Papademos leaves behind a complicated dossier, including such files as public unrest, a potential detachment from the Eurozone, tax evasion and general lack of confidence.¹⁹

The outcome of the Greek dimension of the general economic downturn is far from being predictable at this time, although the ambition of major political decision-makers within the European Union, such as German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Nicolas Sarkozy, appears to yield results at least in the area of confidence in the Eurozone's chances to overcome the current situation. The future of the entire process of European Construction is most certainly at stake and, all the more that of the future steps leading to the furtherance of European economic integration. At present, the risk of witnessing the emergence of a multi-speed Europe is greater than before, given the fact that countries such as Britain are once more reluctant to partake in the consolidation of the financial mechanisms envisaged at the Community level, meant to counteract the threat of the sovereign debt crisis. As far as Greece is concerned, it remains an example of dualism as far as its economic course is concerned: the twists and turns of its political evolution after the defeat of the communist menace did lead to the apparition of the so-called Greek miracle, but this is an expression that has never encompassed a full picture of either the Greek economy or its society - let alone political culture. Instead, the economic development of this country during the Junta regime and afterwards is not meant to be considered an example of growth, one that ought to be compared to a genuine miracle. In fact, it is merely a case of mismanaged potential, in which increasingly acute reliance on foreign loans ultimately generated a dangerous situation that was bound to emerge, to the apparent ignorance of the European Union's supervision mechanisms. However, the current approach taken at the Community level is somewhat encouraging, as its long-term effects are likely to prevent the aggravation of such situations as the current downturn, at the expense of more sovereignty directed to the EU level. We have yet to closely observe the evolution of such prospects of the European Union's economy, taken as a whole, and

¹⁹ *New Greek Prime Minister Lucas Papademos to be sworn in*, The Telegraph, 11 Nov. 2011, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/financialcrisis/8883107/New-Greek-prime-minister-Lucas-Papademos-to-be-sworn-in.html> (accessed on 14th Dec. 2011).

that of Greece in particular, in order to predict the outcome of these trying times that call for prompt measures, social cohesion and long-term foresight.

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Russia

– rebirth of the Empire versus European security-

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“I can not tell you how Russia will act. It’s a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma...The only key is Russia’s national interest.” (Winston Churchill)

Abstract: Der vorliegende Beitrag beschäftigt sich mit einem Überblick über die neuen internationalen Russlands Vorgehen sowie seine neue Vision für Europa und die Beziehungen zwischen ihnen, wenn man an die ehemaligen Sowjetrepubliken heutigen unabhängigen und pro westlichen Ländern denkt. Hat Russland verfolgen eine Auferstehung des ehemaligen Reiches und Einfluss-Bereich und wie wird dieses Interesse im Hinblick auf die europäische Sicherheit übersetzt werden? Wird es eine Herausforderung für die Europäische Union als auch für Russland? Dennoch nimmt Russland Lehren aus niemand aufgrund seiner Hartnäckigkeit, um seine eigene Sicht auf die Demokratie zu definieren, ein Recht, dass Wladislaw Surkow, die Nummer 2 in der ehemaligen Regierung Putin, als "souveräne Demokratie" lautet: "Der Westen ist kein Vorbild für uns . Wir sind souverän. "Und das ist, wo der Kern des Problems liegt und die EU und dem Westen müssen handeln.

Keywords: security strategy, hegemony, ambition, exapansion, influence area, stability, enlargement.

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During a visit in Russia, the author of “Putin and the new Russia”, Michael Stürmer, found in a train station in Moscow a small golden coin, nicely crafted, representing Saint George riding and killing the dragon. What seemed funny was the fact that there was no sign of the symbols that frightened the entire world, the reaper and the hammer, nor the red stars, but one could see an orthodox Russia, and the worshiped image of the holy winner, on the Russian uniforms, and maybe Putin’s ink pot. Saint George is the protector of the presidential palaces against all intruders and the one that symbolizes, invoking the past, a journey to the unknown.

This is nowadays Russia, a country that succeeded to rise again and succeeds to raise questions about its destiny: Russia is an enormous country, lying from Kaliningrad, at the Baltic Sea to the Eastern Sahalin Island, an area with unpopulated spaces, with huge potential and a population over 140 millions people, of which 15 millions represent Muslims. Russia affirmed itself as a power with enormous military resources, of which 10.000 different nuclear weapons, is an energetic giant, with oil reserves, that shall last for more than 30 years and natural gas for more than 180 years.

One must add to these descriptions the ambiguity and Russian oscillation in terms of geopolitics and culture, regarding Europe and Asia, its weak elements of democracy and strong ones of autocracy.

As any other analysis dedicated to Russia, the core of the problem brought to attention is the same: will the revolutionary Russia become a factor of stability inside this global industrial and postindustrial organizational form?

The novelty that this research aims to reveal is the answer to an important question: does Russia pursue a resurrection of the former Empire and influence area and how will this interest be translated in terms of European security. Will it be a challenge for both the European Union as well as for Russia?

Will Russia accept the democratic principles and cooperate peacefully with the EU in order to accomplish its interests and the European ones?

The direction that Russia chooses depends on the West, mainly on the European Union, on its cohesion, its art to govern and its capacity to understand Russia.

What is Russia's national interest? The answer in an ongoing elaboration, the question remains open, what can we be sure of is the fact that in the contemporary international relations system and on the European continent, given today's meanings of security and its challenges, Russia will play a key part, part that she is more than willing to take and exercise.

The research proposes an historical approach, analyzing the major events that have marked and shaped Russia's behavior, as well as its relationship with the European Union and the European continent. Approach that will be backed up by a qualitative analysis of official documents, such as security strategies, Europe's security strategy, the new Russia Security strategy, speeches belonging to authorities from both sides and their meanings. Books of well known authors dealing with Russia's position and behavior, its interests and motivations or instruments, means to achieve them, such as *Moscow and the world. The Ambition of grandeur: an illusion*, by Anne de Tinguy or Michael Stürmer's *Putin and the new Russia*, are also good resources for a well structured and solid answer to the Russian question.

After the collapse of the USSR, Russia is back on track, growing and asserting a new principle: the economic power means political power, and Moscow has managed to transform the event in a political lesson and instrument.

Yet, Russia takes lessons from no one, given its stubbornness to define its own view over democracy, a right that Vladislav Surkov, number 2 in the former Putin administration, denominated as "sovereign democracy": "The West is not a model for us. We are sovereign." And this is where the core of the problem lies and where the EU and the West must take measures and act.

The Eastern enlargement of the EU, including the Eastern Central European countries (EEC) has modified Russia's character, preoccupations and aspirations towards the European continent. At US's initiative, the European countries have been firstly accepted within NATO before becoming members of the EU. In this way the populations and political elites have expressed their gratitude to America and their loyalty to NATO for the important part they had in fighting communism, guarantying European security and opening the western structures to the East. On the other hand, for the EEC states the

accession to the European Union is essential for their political stability, for the maintenance of peaceful relationships with their neighbors and mainly for the economical prosperity.

Kremlin has struggled and opposed to the NATO and UE enlargement towards East, has constantly tried to exploit the euro-American tensions, to deepen the gaps between the EU's states and to promote a policy of empty restoration, insisting that it has the right to dominate the neighboring states. For many, the EEC countries are considered to be Russophobes and trying to create hostility between the EU's and Russia's policies.

What former president Putin has managed to accomplish was magnificent for Russia's stateliness and grandeur: he has concentrated the political power at Kremlin, has eliminated the opposition and the independent press. He refused to acknowledge the Soviet Union's evil part in the division of Europe as well as in the conquering, oppression and devastation of Central Eastern Europe.

The EU has promised to these states and the ones in the Western Balkans that if they comply with the Copenhagen Criteria they will be accepted in the EU or up till now such an offer has not been made yet to any of these countries. Ukraine, Republic Moldavia and Belarus do not have any strong intentions and motivations for pursuing the necessary reforms in order to be accepted in the EU, and they are in danger of falling again under Moscow's influence.

And so a new division of Europe would lead to a huge area of instability.

1. Russia's foreign policy agenda

The foreign policy has traditionally been Russia's main concern, often detrimental to its internal progress. But the Putin administration managed to consolidate a powerful central government and at the same time to promote an "authoritarian state in order to restore

Russia's great power status.”² In Putin's view a stronger state would allow Russia to solve its internal problems, and most important to project its international position on the former soviet satellites. Putin declared that his “mission was to revive the state and promote the Russian national idea”³, the state nationalism, has become under Vladimir Putin a true leading principle as well as a complete true ideology.

Furthermore, with the 2000 *Russian Foreign Policy Concept*, Putin's Kremlin set some main objectives on the foreign policy agenda, incorporating the ideology of Russia's entire activity in the field of international relations: remaking Russia's global presence, promoting and projecting Russia's identity as great power, undermining the US as unique superpower, by restraining their margin for maneuver, creating alliances with countries cautious about US's influence on the European continent, exploiting the conflicts between US and its European allies, using the strategic resources in order to obtain economic and political influence within the former Russian Empire.

Talking about Russia's ambitions to revive the empire, Putin's approach of the foreign policy has been compared to that of the Tsarist Foreign Minister, Aleksandr Gorceakov, in the XIXth century⁴: setting as main goal the alteration of global power distribution in Russia's advantage, the Putin administration promotes a non-aggressive foreign policy, which seeks cooperation with the US and the integration within the international economic institutions, to gain resources and markets, that were meant to contribute to the reconstruction and modernization of the Russian economy.

This attitude leads the West to a false feeling of security and the illusion of permanent partnership, while Moscow waits quietly to reaffirm its status of great power. Putin's view of foreign policy is a great strategy; the economic, political and military vulnerabilities of its neighbors are being exploited in Moscow's advantage.

Russian Foreign Policy Concept defined the basic guidelines, the methods and means to defend the Russian Federation's long term interests with regard to the

² Janusz Bugajski, *Pacea Rece. Noul imperialism al Rusiei*, Bucuresti: Casa Radio, Colectia Orbital, 2005, p. 35

³ *ibidem*

⁴ Janusz Bugajski, *op.cit*, p. 43

international matters. This new platform for the foreign policy was hand in hand with the newly approved National Security Concept, the main document that analyzed the external dangers and security threats for the Russian Federation.⁵

The main objective of the new Concept for Foreign Policy remains the collaboration with the CIS states, with main focus on the development of good neighborhood relations, partnership with the Community members and deepening the integration processes regarding different fields.

The traditional priority of the Russian foreign policy is Europe, as Russia considers itself an inseparable part of Europe's history and progress. One of the most significant directions of the Russia- Europe cooperation leads to the creation of a stable, complete European security system, as well as the multilateral cooperation between Russia and the EU. The EU has become one of our main partners in world politics and economy.⁶

It is true that the EU is a thriving association of democratic states with no expansionist intentions, is an attractive "soft" model for Eastern Europe. Instead, Russia is acting aggressive and subversive in the region, claiming the Russian language official in order to restore the ex-Soviet states, the granting of dual citizenship and renunciation of the East Europeans to attachments to NATO.

Furthermore, the Russian foreign policy agenda takes into consideration also: an active dialogue with Russia, considering that the interaction Russia- NATO can become the key guarantor of stability and security on the continent, the importance of Asia, Africa and Latin America, in order to deepen their economic collaboration and the political dialogue.

⁵ Igor Ivanov, *Politica externa a Rusiei in epoca globalizarii*, Bucuresti: Ed. Fundatiei Culturale Române, 2003, speech of former Russian Foreign Minister, Russia's foreign policy in the current stage, Moscow, 2000, p.159

⁶ *Idem*, p.169

2. From Russia with love: the Eastern Europe case

Moscow's ambitions to regain its domination in Eastern Europe continues to mark the Russian political elite as well as its desire to regain its influence in the neighborhood, invoking the everlasting soviet brotherhood, Moscow launching therefore an offensive meant to ruin the legitimization of the sovereignty of the states once part of the former USSR, to restore its economic, political and security hegemony within the CIS (Community of Independent States) and to finally intimidate the governs by inciting the Russian minorities, offering them citizenship and Russian passports.

The Community of Independent States is the main mean that Moscow has to rebuild its influence sphere and domination upon the territories of the former Soviet Union. Created in 1991, the CIS was meant to be a tool for Russia's approach and closeness to its smaller neighbors, as well as for preventing their loss from its sphere of influence: "CIS is in a double meaning, an instrument of the Russian foreign policy. It serves as a mean to coordinate the policies of the member states. It is also a mechanism to certify Russia's hegemony over the other 11 states."⁷

Within Russia's strategy, four sub regions in the Eastern part of Europe play a central role, the European part of the CIS, the Baltic area, Central Europe and South-Eastern Europe. Yet, the European part of the CIS, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova represent the most important are for Moscow, in order to restore its domination and project its growing power over Central and Western Europe. Under the Putin administration, the reintegration of the former soviet space has become a priority, as the revival of this hegemonic Empire would assert and consolidate Russia's position as an important global actor and a factor of stability on the European continent.

Regarding the restoration of the former Russian Empire, Moscow follows several guiding lines, which have become also its primary objectives in the neighborhood, shaping its attitude and behavior in this area with the main actors, among which also the EU:

⁷ Janusz Bugajski, *op.cit*, p. 77

- To influence the neighboring states' foreign and security policies, struggle that is most obvious in the CIS area, where Moscow seeks total control. Russia wants to expand its influence upon the smaller and weaker states in order to create political allies on the international stage and to neutralize possible oppositions to its policies, as well to prevent the adhering of these states to any other alliance, a risk for Russia's interests, such as NATO, or the EU;
- Russia is looking for economic benefits and monopoly, given the fact that these Eastern states represent all new profitable markets, open for investments, cheap labor force, and this would allow Russia a great influence on the politics in the areas of economics, financial, trade and investments;
- One of Moscow's main objectives is to transform Europe's dependence to its energy supplies and economic investments into a political influence;
- CIS has become in Russia's strategy a tool and mean to restore and strengthen its influence, and moreover to assure her the status of global power, becoming an equal partner of the US, an actor capable to balance the American influence in Eurasia;
- Through this involvement in Europe, Moscow seeks to weaken the transatlantic relations and the Europe –US connection, in order to strengthen the European pole as a mean against the US, setting therefore a new security system, Russia- EU on the old continent.

And Russia has all the means to make these objectives happen, means it has already used, no matter the outcome, but always taking into account its own interests⁸: from diplomatic means, to increase its influence among the political leaders and neighbors, through treaties and agreements, military threats, frequently used as a response to the political evolutions in Eastern Europe, and mainly in the CIS area, the control over the energy, essential in the reconstruction of its internal economic power, as well as a mean of blackmail and oppression, a significant factor of the foreign policy, moreover the economic levers, having successfully created a dependency of the eastern European neighbors to its

⁸ *Idem*, p. 63

credits, trade and investments, using it as both a weapon of seduction and an punishment instrument.

Last but not least, the Putin- Medvedev tandem exacerbates the ethnic conflicts in the neighborhood, supporting the ethnical Russian minorities, displaying territorial pretensions and supporting the separatist enclaves.

Through intimidation, energetic blackmail and political motivated investments, Russia can become a threat for Eastern Central Europe, by restoring its privileges in the region and dictating the security options of these states. Former President Putin referred to Ukraine as to “Little Russia”, o term heritage of the czarist age, attacking the West that wants to separate Ukraine from Russia. In Moldova, Moscow pushes for the acceptance of a resolution that would recognize Transnistria’s autonomy and would guarantee the permanent presence of the Russian troops in this province, while the population here bets on the European integration, and is attached to the European values.

Russia wants to regain its influence and status of superpower, asserting itself as an active and committed partner for the international community, it is willing to solve the international conflicts, like those from Republic Moldova, South Caucasus, or the north Korean crisis, the tensions in Central Asia, Kashmir, but moreover, pretends the official restoration of the Russian language in the former soviet republics, granting double citizenship and demands from the eastern European giving up their attachments to NATO

“Considering a long term perspective, we will try our best to strengthen the international relations based on the principles of equality and mutual cooperation, under the frames of international law, and assuring a solid and fair security”. Russia presents itself today as a responsible actor on the international stage, justifying therefore, as Anne de Tinguy called it, the ambition of grandeur.⁹ In its wish to develop a dialogue between civilizations, Putin gave a new dimension to the Russian foreign policy and transformed Russia in a mediator between the West and the rest of the world.

⁹Anne De Tinguy, *Moscova si lumea. Ambitia grandorii: o iluzie?*, București: Minerva, 2008, p.10

One no longer speaks about the power of the Soviet Union, but that of the Russian Federation, a construction at half way between a national state with huge dimensions and a continental Empire, with a troubling Muslim population.

Russia pursues the strengthening of security and the restoring of its empyreal influence, facts that require more attention for the CIS countries: an Ukraine that wants now a closer relationship with the EU and NATO, as well as with the Central Asia countries, in possession of oil and gas deposits, which, having escaped from the USSR influence, are struggling now to avoid a new dependency to Gazprom and Rosneft.

Vladimir Putin was animated by the ambition of transforming Russia, which “strong and independent”, is setting a straight goal towards the European continent: Russia as part of the Great Powers of today’s world, to be considered as one of them in order to be able to talk equally and take part in debates, Russia must have an influence according to its status of “great power”. We are dealing now with a Russia aware of the fact that power and grandeur rely on soft power, understood as the capacity to be a team player, to promote a positive agenda regarding a wide range of international problems and challenges, all of these while preserving your cultural identity, respecting at the same time the diversity of cultures and the world’s traditions.

Moscow is under the impression that it has given too much and received too little: it is still treated as a junior partner that is not allowed to have anything in the former soviet area, the EU tries to consolidate its structure and areas of influence, affirming itself as a great actor on the international scene, attracting more and more of the former soviet republics in its area of influence, while these states assert their wish to independence and accession to the western structures.

3. Energy: blackmail and power

Russia’s expansion policy towards Eastern Europe is revived due to the strategic importance of the region; this is a significant route for the transport of the energetic

resources to a growing EU. The energy dependency proved to have a key role in Russia's relations with its former satellites.

Oil and gas companies that had close relation to the state played a major role in shaping Moscow's external relations.

Companies such as Gazprom work as weapons for the govern, sometimes they cut off or restrain the provisions of fuel to certain countries, and even hijacked energy from the western markets, in order to gain political advantages for Russia.

It has become clear that Russia manipulates gracefully the energy sector in the interest of its foreign policy, as well as the fact that this sector has a significant and direct impact on the foreign policy. Energy is to be seen as an essential geostrategic tool and also as an important security problem.

Gazprom is a state within a state; it has the control over most of deposits of natural gas as well as over the pipelines departing from European Russia to Siberia and later to Western Europe.¹⁰ Gazprom, which is acquiring and controlling Central Asian oil pipeline, joins the desire of the Kremlin administration for a more efficient recovery of lost empire. Gazprom's strategy is Russia's strategy.

Gazprom's foundation is based on the oil it holds on three natural gas fields: Nadym-Pur and Yamal peninsula in Western Siberia, and Shtokman fields, located off the north coast of Western Siberia. Moreover, Gazprom has acquired throughout Europe and parts of the infrastructure necessary natural gas extraction industry. Wingas (a subsidiary company of Wintershall, part of BASF) is 35.5% owned by Gazprom, plus 10% of interconnected pipeline between Belgium and Britain.

Significant in this respect is the statement made by Vice President of Gazprom, Alexander Medvedev, who argued that Gazprom's ambition is to retain its position as the largest natural gas exporter to Europe and become "the largest energy company in the world."

¹⁰ Michael Stürmer, *Putin și noua Rusie*, București: Litera Internațional, 2009, p.148

Russia is the main market of Western Europe, with transit through some former Soviet states, gas and oil has becoming a tool in the hands of Russia, for political and economic blackmail, a means of coercion. The repeated energy crises have proved that Russia relies heavily on natural resources and is a card it plays whenever it wants, unhindered, against everyone, wishing to fulfill its ambitions and interests of the empire great recovery and establish itself as a strong partner for negotiation and action international arena.

In Europe, two companies are preferred partners E. ON and BASF in Ludwigshafen. In 2005 in Essen, Gazprom and BASF signed an agreement on the development of the participation of BASF on the oil and gas field from Yujno-Russkoye, preceded by another one with E. ON, based on cooperation in respect of natural gas production and electricity generation in Russia.

For Gazprom these arrangements are a demonstration of what Medvedev called "cooperation with the states of Western Europe and worldwide." A simple strategy, but ambitious: "pooling of resources makes it possible funding partners cheaper ... Both Gazprom and the German partners retain a place in all areas of operation as full partners. The collaboration allows an optimization of the process, thus ensuring greater stability and greater security of supply of products."¹¹

On the other hand, Gazprom had to take into account the ambitions of independence and energy security issued by the EU through projects like South Stream, Nord Stream or Nabucco.

Nabucco pipeline project was conceived in Vienna in 2002 and signed in July 2009, with the intention of creating an alternative route for supplying Europe with natural gas from the Caspian Sea basin and the Middle East. For geostrategic reasons, the project is supported by both the European Union and the United States. The pipeline will cost around 8 billion euros, will be a journey of 3,300 km and will pass from Azerbaijan through Georgia, Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary to Austria, being supplied with gas from Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Iraq, while Kazakhstan, Iran and Egypt would be able to connect to the pipeline as suppliers.

¹¹ *Idem*, p.150

Currently, Russia supplies 40% of gas consumption in Central and Eastern Europe. Most pipelines pass through Ukraine to the West. Avoiding Russian territory, the Nabucco pipeline would reduce the monopoly power and the ability to blackmail Moscow's relations with European countries importing and prevent a price uncompetitive at the discretion of the Russian state company Gazprom.

The Nabucco project, expected to be completed in 2014, was delayed and sabotaged by former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, who made common cause with Gazprom and have actively promoted the interests of Moscow.¹²

In 2006, Gazprom has proposed building a gas pipeline route similar, rivaling the Nabucco project, called South Stream pipeline, which would connect the Russian port Bregovaia, under the Black Sea, and the Bulgarian port of Varna and would cross through Serbia and Hungary to Austria. A branch of South Stream pipeline runs through Bulgaria and Greece to Italy. Gazprom has already obtained the agreement of Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Italy for the project. So far, funding and sources of pipeline gas to achieve this remain unresolved.

Since the Nabucco gas pipeline will go through two thirds of the route through Turkey, Ankara initially insisted that Turkey to obtain a discretionary 15% of natural gas through the Nabucco pipeline that will pass. Separately, Turkey has negotiated with the rulers in Tehran and Iran to develop natural gas deposits and to contribute, directly or indirectly, through Turkey, to the Nabucco pipeline. Iran's direct participation in the pipeline would be extremely useful for ensuring the economic success of the project.

The EU has already allocated 200 million for the initial start of the project and pledged additional funds to participate in the coming years. Former German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer has been enthusiastically dedicated to the project Nabucco.

Leaders of EU have realized that the exclusive energy dependence on Russia is harmful both strategically and economically. However, Moscow still having considerable

¹² Nicolae Filipescu, *Securitatea energetică a Europei*, 2010, [<http://www.revista22.ro/securitatea-energetic259-a-europei-7440.html>], 25 ianuarie 2010

influence in former Soviet republics in Central Asia, has fiercely opposed any efforts to reduce the Gazprom monopoly on natural gas supply for Europe. Some analysts believe that Moscow will try to destabilize the transit corridor designed for Nabucco pipeline in the Caucasus. Russia recently supplied weapons to Armenia worth 1.5 billion dollars. Considering that most of these weapons will be in Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan has condemned the massive arming of Armenia to Russia.

Completion in 2005 of the SCP gas pipeline (South Caucasus Pipeline), avoiding Russia, partly contributed to the diversification of gas to Turkey and southern Europe.

Another project proposed by Ukraine in 2005, called White Stream, still in evaluation stage, would create an extension of the SCP gas pipeline through Georgia and Ukraine, with future extensions to Poland and Lithuania.

The immediate realization of the Nabucco pipeline is essential for the EU's energy security. Europeans must take into account alternative sources of gas supply and transport corridors that are not under the control of the company Gazprom, which compete with gas imported from Russia and to meet future energy needs of Europe.

Conclusions

In Russia, domestic fundamentals to achieve a new global role, quite different from the aspirations of the Soviet empire, are being defined. One does not talk about the power of the Soviet Union anymore, but about that of the Russian Federation, a national state, at the crossroad of a continental empire with an uncomfortable cohabitation with a restless Muslim population.

In Medvedev's opinion, "empires come and go, but what matters is national interest in any circumstances".

Russia seeks security and rebuilding of its influence and the restoration of empire, will have to pay more attention to the CIS countries with which Ukraine wants to be closer to the EU and even NATO, but also with Central Asian states, holding oil or gas, which after they have escaped the old Soviet dependency, try now to avoid another dependency

on Gazprom and Rosneft. We must not forget the frozen conflicts in South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Transnistria.

Medvedev will continue the tradition started by Vladimir Putin, will focus on the transformation of Russia's image of "lone wolf" brought along his predecessor. To achieve superpower status, Russia's strategy should also include naval bases on the Iranian coast of the Mediterranean, the Middle East quartet, but also to obtain veto expanded throughout the Middle East.

On long term, Russia's interest is to develop a better relationship with the Europeans and especially with the new administration in Washington. Russian economy will have a remarkable advance that will place her in 2010 as the global economy no 7, with a GDP in 2020 as no 5 power, exceeding thus Germany, Brazil, Britain and France. Until 2020, the Russian side of the world's GNP will increase easily, and the EU will degrade, but will not represent more than 3.2%. In 2025 Russia will be the 8th world economy as major industrialized countries, China and India, in July of 2050 will have exceeded once Germany, Britain and France. Vladimir Putin was driven by ambition to transform Russia to a "strong and independent" state, the Russian diplomacy aiming at creating conditions for attaining this ambition.

Russia must have an influence on the extent of her status of "great power".

Another objective is the continuous state of independence: "We are a free nation" (former President Putin said on February 25, 2005), invoking the millennial history of Russia and almost always having the privilege to lead an independent foreign policy and not it today will change that tradition. "

"Russia's foreign policy independence is an absolute imperative, Sergei Lavrov claimed ... for us, the issue of sovereignty is a key issue."

It's a new Russia, aware of the fact that the grandeur, the hard power and soft power is based on a defined in terms of ability to "play together," to promote a positive agenda on a wide range of international issues and challenges, and all these while you keep your cultural identity and civilization, while respecting the diversity of world cultures and traditions."

Moscow finds the brutality and ineffectiveness of U.S. policy, both in the world (with Iraq) as well as on the European continent, but also potential multipolar game.

"Color revolutions" in Georgia and especially Ukraine caused a shock comparable to the U.S. some 11 September, and this confirms that post-Soviet space is not an entity. Occurs when the EU eastward enlargement and NATO, which integrates and Baltic countries. In this context, Dmitry Medvedev wants to enter history as a great reformer, his speech of 14 February 2008 in Krasnoyarsk, citing Catherine the Great illustrating this: "Freedom is the soul of everything, without it everything is dead. I want everyone to obey the law, but not as slaves. "

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Prospects for institutional reform in Bulgaria in the Post Lisbon

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Abstract: In this article the author draw an analysis of the Treaty of Lisbon and its innovations. The Lisbon Treaty reformed the foundations of the European Union and marked the culmination of a process of Treaty reform that began soon after the Treaty of Nice. For the first time the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are signatories of a treaty, under which, until now they had only aspirations for integration. Continental unification process is not fully realized as a result of the transition states of Eastern Europe. Currently all EU member states are and define, in the new European architecture, its positions, aspirations, and not last, consider including their potential to respond to new challenges, among which we mention the right to manage with Old Europe, European resource. One of the European voices which the author described in the article is the one of Bulgaria.

Keywords: Ratification, Treaty, Neighborhood Policy, European Security and Defence Policy, Internal Market

The Lisbon Treaty, the latest institutional reform treaty of the European Union (EU), went into effect on December 1, 2009. The document was signed by the heads of state or government of the 27 EU member countries in December 2007. The process of completing ratification by each individual member country lasted nearly two years, concluding with ratification by the Czech Republic on November 3, 2009. The Lisbon Treaty reforms the EU's governing institutions and decision-making process to enable the

EU to operate more effectively. The treaty grew out of the proposed “constitutional treaty” that foundered after French and Dutch voters rejected it in referendums in 2005¹.

The Lisbon Treaty seeks to give the EU a stronger and more coherent voice with the creation of a new position, President of the European Council. Additionally, the Lisbon Treaty creates the new position of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, a de facto EU foreign minister who may increase the weight and visibility of the EU on the world stage. The “foreign minister” will be supported by a new EU diplomatic service. The treaty also makes changes to the EU’s internal decision-making mechanisms. These changes have been designed to streamline the process and make it less susceptible to gridlock or blockage.

Additional reforms attempt to address concerns about democratic accountability and transparency in EU policy-making by granting a greater role to the directly elected European Parliament, national parliaments, and citizens’ initiatives. Experts assert that the Lisbon Treaty could have positive implications for U.S.-EU relations. Some observers believe that it could allow the EU to move past its recent preoccupation with distracting internal questions and take on a more active and effective role as a U.S. partner in tackling global challenges. There are indications that adoption of the Lisbon Treaty could make the EU more amenable to future enlargement, including to the Balkans and perhaps Turkey, which the United States supports. On the other hand, some observers doubt how much of an impact the Lisbon Treaty will have, and some skeptics maintain that a stronger EU poses a potentially detrimental rival to NATO and the United States².

The EU Lisbon Treaty, which came into effect in December 2009 marked the end of a difficult period of EU internal reform. The Treaty provides a legal framework and new institutions that should enable the EU to underpin its political role on the world stage. In a context of economic and financial crisis and rapidly emerging new global players, it is increasingly important for the EU to become a more coherent, credible, effective and visible actor in the world³.

¹ Herve Bribosia, „*The Main Institutional Innovations of the Lisbon Treaty*”, p. 58-78;

² Kristin Archick, Derek E. Mix , *The European Union’s Reform Process: The Lisbon Treaty* , February 22, 2010

³ European Center for Development Policy Management, The Post - Lisbon landscape: development at a crossroads

Enlargement has been one of the Union's most successful projects over the past 50 years or so. Even though the current economic crisis seems to bring domestic politics into sharp focus, the European dimension is never absent and countries within the EU have tended to do better than those without. The extension of the single market and the four freedoms of movement have added growth to the 'old' member-states, but it should be stressed that all countries, including the 12 new ones (who joined in 2004 and 2007) have benefitted. This is reflected in popular support for the EU: populations have on the whole been enthusiastic about both the process of accession and membership itself. For example, 75% of all Bulgarians approved the country's entry into the EU prior to accession and at present the level of support stands at 80%. Moreover, confidence in EU institutions is higher than in national institutions. This is all the more remarkable since membership is not a one-off step, but instead a long process – no fewer than 17 years have passed since the collapse of Communism, yet at the same time Sofia's achievements have been substantial and significant⁴.

Given the very different levels of economic development across the Union, Bulgaria was always going to have to work very hard to meet all the criteria (especially on inflation, public debt, budgetary deficit), but the country is making steady progress towards the ambitious goals. The special mechanisms put in place for Bulgaria and Romania (the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism and biannual reports on progress) were never resented but accepted by the overwhelming majority of the country who endorsed Bulgaria's entry. Accession brought a large economic stimulus to the economy. Until the crisis hit in 2008, the country had seen a 20-22% of growth in foreign direct investment (FDI), amounting to €20 billion. Bulgaria also experienced unprecedented levels of stability: the currency board arrangements – introduced after the serious financial and banking crisis in 1996-97 – first linked the national currency to the Deutsche Mark and then to the Euro, thereby kept exchange rate and price volatility to a minimum. Moreover, for the last 8 years the country has enjoyed a budget surplus: in the last 4 years, this represented 3% and was used to reduce public debt from 32% to 16% of GDP. Finally, Bulgaria is a very open economy, with 60% of exports going to the rest of the EU and a significant influx of FDI: in the last 5 years, this has represented 5% of GDP growth and in

⁴ Marta Cartabia, *European Constitutional Law Review*, „ *Europe and rights: Taking Dialogues Seriously*, Asser Press and Contributors, 2009, p. 5-31

the last 4 years, this has even represented to 6%. In March 2009, unemployment stood at 6.7% and such was lower than the EU average.

In terms of cooperation in Central and Southeast Europe, Bulgaria's priorities are threefold: the Southern Balkans, the Black Sea region and energy security. First of all, the region of the Western Balkans was pacified partly through the help of Romania and Bulgaria. In particular, the integration into the regional economy and other measures of stabilisation were successful, even though this involved tricky issues like Kosovo and Bosnia. Now the challenge is to extend this model to the Southern Balkans. Second, the Black Sea region – like the Union for the Mediterranean or the EU's Northern Dimension – could be designated as a distinct region and policy priority aimed at forging closer links with privileged partners like Turkey and Russia. Bulgaria and Romania would play a leading role in developing this strategic part of Europe. Third, on energy security, it is imperative to expand gas transfer (via the proposed Nabucco pipeline via Turkey to Austria, the South Stream project from Russia's Black Sea to the Italian Mediterranean), but also to promote renewable energy.

Bulgaria was the sixth member state to ratify the Lisbon Treaty in parliament on March 2008, with an overwhelming majority of members of Parliament and broad support among political parties.

During the whole process of preparation and ratification, Bulgaria was very supportive to the Lisbon Treaty. Bulgaria clearly expressed its intentions to keep the Treaty as intact as possible, in order to have a coherent solution of the problems the Treaty originally intended to handle. At the same time, Bulgaria expressed its openness for potential new solutions if such ideas serve the entry into force of the Treaty⁵.

This position is not at all surprising: previously, Bulgaria was among the countries which ratified the Constitutional Treaty. Sofia as well has always had concerns with regard to alternative scenarios of development due to its geographic and also economic position.

In terms of cooperation in Central and Southeast Europe, Bulgaria's priorities were threefold: the Southern Balkans, the Black Sea region and energy security. First of all, the region of the Western Balkans was pacified partly through the help of Romania and

⁵ Georgiev Vihar „, *Commission on the loose? Delegated Lawmaking and comitology after Lisbon*”, p. 1-27

Bulgaria. In particular, the integration into the regional economy and other measures of stabilisation were successful, even though this involved tricky issues like Kosovo and Bosnia. Now the challenge is to extend this model to the Southern Balkans. Second, the Black Sea region – like the Union for the Mediterranean or the EU’s Northern Dimension – could be designated as a distinct region and policy priority aimed at forging closer links with privileged partners like Turkey and Russia. Bulgaria and Romania would play a leading role in developing this strategic part of Europe. Third, on energy security, it is imperative to expand gas transfer (via the proposed Nabucco pipeline via Turkey to Austria, the South Stream project from Russia’s Black Sea to the Italian Mediterranean), but also to promote renewable energy. At the international summit on “Natural Gas for Europe: Security and Partnership” held in Sofia on 24-25 April 2009 and hosted by the Bulgarian President and government, 11 heads of state and government signed a joint declaration, including the Russian President Dmitry Medvedev⁶.

1. Ratification via Parliament

Bulgaria was an active participant in the elaboration of the new reforming Treaty. As a result, the Bulgarian national interests are well defended, according to the Minister of Foreign Affairs this treaty gives further opportunities for a more transparent policy-making process within the institutional machinery of the EU.

Bulgarian politicians expressed their support for the idea that the Treaty should not be ratified as fast as possible but that a wider public debate should take place before the ratification starts.

Some of the European parliament members support the Lisbon Treaty ratification by the Bulgarian National Assembly, arguing that referendum ratification could be used. On the other hand, the minister of European Affairs is in favor of the ratification by the Parliament, not via referendum.

Bulgaria supported the main changes foreseen by the Lisbon Treaty, such as:

- Extended Qualified Majority Voting
- increased role of the EU Parliament
- The function of the President of the European Council

⁶ Rudolf Streinz, *Verfassung für Europa; institutionelle Reformen der Eg/ EU*, „ *The European Constitution after the Failure of the Constitutional Treaty*”, Springer, Verlag, 2008, p. 160-187

- The High Representative for Foreign Policy
- The primacy of the EU law before the national one

Bulgaria also accepted the revision of the size of the European Commission and has been in favor of making the charter of Fundamental Rights legally binding.

The only instance of Bulgaria adopting a firm position and exerting pressure concerned an issue of cultural nature, and was quickly resolved. This issue was the right to use the denomination “Evro” (instead of “Euro”), when writing the common European currency in the Cyrillic alphabet.

2. Enlargement

Sofia is in favour for enlargement in general: Bulgaria’s official position is to support the efforts of all actual candidate and potential candidate countries to become an EU member. The official position is also in line with people’s perceptions (mapped by regular Eurobarometer surveys). With regard to the individual candidate countries, Bulgaria fully supports Croatia’s efforts for membership. As to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bulgaria is supportive, too, but its support is not unconditional (anti-Bulgarian feelings are present in some groups in Macedonia). With regard to Turkey’s bid, Sofia is very cautious. While officially being supportive for the continuation of the negotiations, Bulgaria has put forward a specific condition to the conclusion of Turkey’s accession process. This concerns bilateral relations, including a claim for compensation for the heirs of fugitives from the 1911-1913 Balkan Wars. These requests are included in the EP’s report on Turkey⁷.

3. Neighborhood Policy:

Bulgaria is in a special position regarding its relations with the Eastern ENP partners, and even more with Russia.

According to the Official Bulgarian position, the Black Sea dimension of the ENP is one of the focuses of the contribution of the country’s foreign policy under the Common Foreign and Security Policy. Bulgaria played an active role in the Black Sea Synergy

⁷ Bulgaria – The EU New Member States as Agenda Setters in the Enlarged European Union, European Policies Initiative–Open Society Institute, Sofia, 2009.

http://eupi.osi.bg/fce/001/0070/files/BulgariaCountryReport_OSI-Sofia_EuPI_April2009_.pdf

discussions. The accession implies a strong need for extended cooperation on the EU with that region, and its ties to central Asia. The connection with the Danube Region is also a priority because according to Bulgaria, the Danube should be a main European vector and a vehicle for strengthening such interaction.

Bulgaria has signed intergovernmental memorandums of cooperation in European and Euro – Atlantic Integration and has a well- grounded interest to participate in the implementation of the Eu Strategy on Central Asia.

Bulgaria does not see the need of new institutions and structures to be established. After its accession to the EU, the country has become the outer border of the blok on the south – western side.

4. European Security and Defence Policy

Due to its geographic location (including the ties to the Black Sea region and the relations with Turkey) as well as to its recent experiences about conflicts in its direct neighbourhood (during the wars in the former Yugoslavia), Bulgaria is highly interested in a stronger Common Foreign Security and Defence Policy. Therefore Bulgaria wants to use its EU membership as a leverage for maintaining the important, but (of course) not leading role of the country in the region in security issues. This is especially true for the country's (and at the same time the EU's) direct neighbourhood, so Bulgaria is particularly interested in the European Neighborhood Policy.

5. Minority rights

In Bulgaria, there are 28 different minorities (ethnic communities). The most important among them are the Turkish and the Roma minority. The rights of ethnic communities are guaranteed as individual rather than as collective rights. Within the EU, Bulgaria intends to pursue (and strengthen) this approach; its official position is that guaranteeing individual rights and non-discrimination is the best possible solution.

Beyond this general approach, Bulgaria has an active policy to integrate the minorities, especially the Roma minority⁸. The measures taken include the improvement of housing, employment and health care conditions for the individuals belonging to this

⁸ The other big minority – that of the Turks – is politically well organised and represented, it has no outstanding social issues, so it does not constitute similar problems and thus does not necessitate similar solutions. For details see: Lessenski (2009)

group. Bulgaria actively supports the emerging European Roma Strategy, and welcomes EU resources as well as the elaboration of a common EU approach as long as there is no contradiction with the above-mentioned Bulgarian concept (based on individual rights).

Interests, positions and influence in some key policy areas

1. Common Agricultural Policy

Bulgaria is interested in preserving the CAP, and is therefore ready to renounce of a part of short-term growth in the agricultural sector for the sake of a successful long-term policy. According to Sofia, on the one hand, the reduction of the proportion of agricultural expenditure and direct payments in the EU budget should be based on the development of different sub-sectors, existing gaps between different rural regions in the Union, as well as on leaving more space for reaction to unforeseen developments (floods and drought). On the other hand, in 2008, the (then) Minister of European Affairs, Gergana Grancharova, has announced Bulgaria's intention to maintain the system of direct payments to farmers. However, for Bulgaria, it is not only important to receive direct financial assistance but also to have equal access to the market in order to strengthen the sector's competitiveness⁹. Bulgaria is supportive of the Health Check of the CAP, but its support is more formal than real: in fact, Sofia opposed many proposed changes. This is the consequence of a cautious approach: as we said above, Bulgaria wants to maintain the CAP as much as possible in its present form, but the country is open for reforms if they are necessary to secure the existence of the whole CAP ("a modified CAP is still better than no CAP at all")¹⁰.

2. Budget

As one of the least well-to-do Member States of the EU, Bulgaria is very much interested to keep the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund as important priorities of the EU budget; solidarity should continue to be expressed in financial terms, as well. The same applies to the CAP (see above). In addition, Bulgaria would like to see more emphasis

⁹ Marinov, Kalin (2008): Bulgaria, In: Tamás Szemlér – Jonas Eriksson (eds.): The EU Budget Review: Mapping the Positions of Member States, SIEPS Report, pp. 117–126

¹⁰ Lessenski (2009)

(expressed also in the EU budget) on energy and climate issues. Sofia also wants to put more emphasis on the competitiveness and innovation component of the Post-Lisbon Strategy, namely the EU2020 Strategy. Due to its geographical situation, Bulgaria is interested in (and is lobbying for) more funds for the development of the protection of external borders in the framework of the area of freedom, security and justice¹¹.

Regarding the system of own resources, Bulgaria is officially against the ideas of any form of EU tax. Sofia would like to see the simplification of the current own resources system: its declared objective is to abolish any kind of rebates and compensations (the most important and most well-known being the UK rebate, but the issue is wider than that: it includes e.g. the rebates on the contribution to the financing of the UK rebate for certain Member States)¹².

3. Internal Market

Bulgaria is interested in maintaining macroeconomic stability in order to be able to maintain without tensions the currency board and also in order to be able to introduce the euro as soon as possible. The country's economic development requires the continuation of the inflow of foreign direct investments, and an organic development of local enterprises is necessary in order to spread more the fruits of development. All this should contribute to lower unemployment and better social protection.

The development of the Internal Market is, of course, crucial from this point of view. In most aspects, Bulgaria follows the general EU line. However, in the issue of the free movement of workers, Bulgaria – very much interested in this topic – has a position that is different from the “average” EU stance: feeling itself interested in lifting the transitory barriers, Sofia is supporting the free movement of workers throughout the EU (despite its potential negative consequences, namely labour shortage) in Bulgaria. These potential consequences, however, lead to a situation in which Sofia is not very active in this issue for the time being. Bulgaria is supportive of the Services Directive, but has a cautious position on the harmonisation of taxation, as substantial progress in this field

¹¹ Lessenski (2009)

¹² Marinov (2008), pp. 117–126.

would be in conflict with the actual economic policy tools of Sofia, and could cause damage to the country (e.g. diversion of FDI)¹³.

4. Energy/climate

Bulgaria imports on average close to half of its energy needs. The energy dependency of the country is very high in the case of crude oil (99.6% in 2006) and natural gas (87.1% in 2006)¹⁴. As alternative supply possibilities do not exist, the Bulgarian economy is very much dependent on crude oil and natural gas imports from Russia; both products have an important share in energy consumption. Not only the leaders, but also the citizens of the country are aware of this dependency – the natural gas crisis in January 2009, with the consequence that masses of Bulgarians remained without heating, proved it painfully. No wonder that Sofia would like to change this situation.

This is why Bulgaria is interested in being involved in different energy network projects. Despite the clear Russian interest behind most of these projects, Sofia hopes that the realisation of these networks could strengthen the position of Bulgaria as a transit and hub country. Such a development could transform the present dependency from Russia into interdependence – of course, asymmetric, but still something better than the actual situation for Bulgaria. In line with this idea (and also as a result of the improving and increasingly pragmatic relations between Bulgaria and Russia), accords have been signed on various energy projects (South Stream, Nabucco, the Burgas-Alexandroupolis oil pipeline, the Burgas-Vlorë oil pipeline).

Beyond energy networks, Bulgaria has a clear position with regard to nuclear energy. Intending to diminish the external energy dependency of the country, the Bulgarian government has plans to build new blocks in order to increase the already existing nuclear energy capacity of the country. Russian involvement is there in this field, as well (Belene nuclear power station).

5. Area of freedom, security and justice

Bulgaria's main priorities – in its own interests, but also due to EU pressure (incorporated in the special Cooperation and Verification Mechanisms) – include the

¹³ Lessenski (2009)

¹⁴ Byuletin za sastayanieto i razvitiето na energetikata na Republika Balgarija, August 2008, p. 8.

reform of the judicial system and the increase of effectiveness of the fight against organised crime and corruption. As these serious problems also hinder the access to and efficient use of EU transfers, the interest in the progress is highly tangible for the citizens of Bulgaria.

As another highly important issue in the field of freedom, security and justice, the accession of the country to the Schengen zone (with the target year 2011) is another priority for Sofia. In order to be able to keep the time frame, Bulgaria has to prove its capacity to protect effectively the EU's external borders and to fulfil all requirements related to this issue.

In addition, Bulgaria wants to be an active participant in EU-wide efforts in the field of justice and home affairs. Bulgaria's official position is in general in line with actual and planned EU actions in this field, thus the country can be regarded as a decision-taker in the policy area of freedom, security and justice¹⁵.

Conclusion:

Bulgaria, as a new, small and poor Member State of the European Union has limited powers to enforce its interests and to tangibly influence EU decisions. In this situation, Sofia – logically – tries to use the EU leverage for achieving results in the fields considered to be of key importance. These fields include energy and climate, the future of the EU budget (with special emphasis on the CAP and Structural/Cohesion Policy), ENP and enlargement, the Internal Market and institutional issues. In some of these fields, the country shows a high activity (the most visible case being energy and climate) and represents in some cases positions that are diverging from the EU “mainstream”. In other fields (e.g. institutional issues), the activity of Sofia has been limited. In a lot of issues, logically, Bulgaria tries to find partners in order to be in a coalition that has a chance to represent the coalition partners' common interests. For successful coalitions big partners are a must; on the basis of the experiences since the country's EU accession, Germany seems to be the “favourite” big partner.

¹⁵ Lessenski (2009)

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Co-Decision Procedure and the Democratic Deficit Issue in the European Union

Institutional adequacies and inadequacies between the Council and the European Parliament

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Abstract: The Maastricht Treaty introduced the co-decision procedure in order to strengthen the democratic legitimacy of the European Union. Utilizing this premise, the present study investigates whether the legislative co-decision procedure has constituted a real step forward in providing stronger democratic supervision in areas where it applies. Its aim is to examine whether an increase in European Parliament's power would necessarily determine an increase in European Union's democratic legitimacy. The study attempts to assess the European Parliament's ability to influence the outcome of the legislative process using an empirical case emphasizing also the significance of the less tangible and non-quantifiable influence exerted by informal dialogues on earlier stages of the decision-making process which are mainly guided by a "quid pro quo" principle. Building on previous findings, the study underlines that the decision making process within the EU is as much informal as formal and goes beyond the formal negotiations in order to provide a holistic image of the EU legislative process which eventually would allow us to make a complete assessment of the highly controversial issue of democratic deficit within the European Union.

Keywords: ♦ Co-decision procedure ♦ European Union ♦ Democratic deficit ♦ Democratic legitimacy ♦ Council of Ministers ♦ European Parliament ♦

Introduction

This study sets out to examine the relationship between the two main legislative bodies of the European Union, the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament, under the co-decision procedure, analyzing its role in strengthening the democratic legitimacy of the European Union. Although there have been many studies regarding the influence and the legislative authority of each institution within the European Union legislative process, relatively little attention has been devoted to the impact of co-decision procedure as related to the European Union democratic deficit issue.

The Maastricht Treaty introduced the co-decision procedure in order to increase the power of the European Parliament and the democratic legitimacy of the European Union. According to several current studies, in many respects, the European Parliament has gained significantly more powers in recent years but it was not successful in closing the gap between the European Union and the public. The aim of this study is to investigate whether co-decision procedure has constituted a real step forward in providing stronger democratic supervision in areas where it applies or the informalities that evolved within the co-decision process had unexpected side-effects contributing to an increasing lack of transparency and accountability.

The vast majority of the studies examining the distribution of power between the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament are utilizing qualitative methods and explanatory models in order to examine the outcomes of the European Union decision-making process focusing on voting records and success rate in amending legislation, but they overlook the institutional informal compromising process driven by a collective rationality that evolves through actors socialization. The premise of this research is to examine whether an increase in European Parliament's power would necessarily determine an increase in European Union's democratic legitimacy. The study would attempt to assess the European Parliament's ability to influence the outcome of the legislative process using an empirical case emphasizing also the significance of the less tangible and non-quantifiable influence exerted by informal dialogues on earlier stages of the decision-making process which are mainly guided by a "quid pro quo" principle. It will assert that the decision making process within the EU is as much informal as formal and would attempt to go beyond the formal negotiations in order to provide a holistic image of the EU

legislative process which eventually would allow us to make a complete assessment of the highly controversial issue of democratic deficit within the European Union.

The study starts by providing an overview of the co-decision procedure which now has more than one decade of practice and points to further research on it in terms of practical politics and theoretical approaches. It then introduces the debate on democratic legitimacy upon which the political management of European Union affairs is based differentiating between *institutional* and *socio-psychological* perspectives. It also aims to examine how the creation and practice of the co-decision procedure affects the main sources of democratic legitimacy within the European Union and makes an account of the main scholarly approaches which assess the positive and negative aspects of the co-decision procedure. The study claims that in order to understand the internal workings of the Council and the European Parliament under co-decision we should focus not only on the formal contacts and dialogues between the two institutions but also on informal dialogues at earlier stages prior to the negotiations that are taking place during the conciliation procedure.

The second section of the study will utilize an empirical case of a legislative procedure concerning the public access to environmental information and will examine in detail the European Parliament's ability to influence the outcome of the adopted text. The text of this directive has been the subject of conciliation and represents a complex case which reveals different opinions from the Council and the European Parliament, thus it represents a perfect case for assessing the weight that the European Parliament could pull on the final legislative act. In order to measure the impact of the European Parliament on this legislative procedure, the study will survey the number of amendments adopted during the decision-making process, their substance and whether they were included in the adopted act. The results of this investigation will allow us to draw a conclusion regarding the way in which the European Parliament affected the content of this specific legislation adopted under co-decision procedure and would serve to test the hypothesis which asserts that the role of the European Parliament has been strengthened by co-decision and consequently it positively contributed to the democratic legitimacy of the European Union.

Although the debates on legislation falling under co-decision are open to public, we cannot draw any conclusion regarding the actual substance of negotiation or its formal or informal nature because the data available for analysis includes only the initial stages of

the negotiation and the final voting, without recording any details related to the informal working practices. Given that, the case study represents just a sample of how influential the European Parliament can be under the co-decision procedure without having the power to generalize about its regular activity, contribution, impact or its role in enhancing the democratic legitimacy of the legislative process of the European Union. However, it represents a valuable insight of the inter-institutional cooperation and if applied more broadly on an increased number of representative cases it could reveal the existence of certain patterns of interaction that could refer practices already embedded in the co-decision process, practices that can lead to further legitimization of the European Union governance or not.

The relationship between the Council and Parliament within co-decision procedure

This section of the study starts by providing an outline of the relationship between Council of Ministers and the European Parliament under co-decision procedure. A substantial majority of the scholars where focusing their attention on analyzing the inter-institutional distribution of power in the European Union co-decision procedure, with a particular emphasize on the role and the impact of the European Parliament. According to Selck and Steuneneberg, the importance of the European Parliament in the co-decision procedure is highly debated, “some argue that it has lost some of its power in comparison with the cooperation procedure, whereas others claim that this procedure has increased the Parliament’s ability to affect European Union policy.”¹

In their article, Napel and Widgren investigate the hypothesis that the “EU has-constitutionally speaking- moved towards a bicameral model which is balanced in the sense that the intergovernmental chamber, the Council of Ministers, and the directly elected chamber, the European Parliament, have equal influence on decision.”² A similar opinion belongs to Tebelis and Garret which argue that after Amsterdam, the European Union has moved a long way towards bicameralism. According to these authors, “there is

¹ Torsten J.Selck and Bernard Steuneneberg, “Between Power and Luck: the European Parliament in the EU Legislative Process”, *European Union Politics*, SAGE Publications, London, 2004, vol. 5 no. 1, pp. 25-46

² Stefan Napel and Mika Widgren, “The inter-institutional distribution of power in the European Union co-decision”, *Social Choice and Welfare*, vol. 27, no. 1, Springer-Verlag, 2006, pp. 129-154

no reason to suggest that either the Council of Ministers or the European Parliament is favored by the procedure, so that both can be expected to have the same influence.”³

Contrary to these arguments, some scholars argue that the European Parliament represents the dominant institution under the co-decision procedure focusing their academic assumptions on empirical analysis of the recent, actual outcomes of the co-decision procedure which show that the European Parliament has increased its ability to obtain its amendments. A more recent research by Tsebelis, emphasizes” Parliament’s success rate in amending legislation in the interplay with the Commission and the Council of Ministers.”⁴ Another significant study that underlines the “relative success of the European Parliament in securing its amendments, which continues to be so according to European Parliament activity reports” belongs to Shackleton.⁵

However, as Selck and Steunenberg argue “acceptance of amendments does not yet shed light on the role of the other legislative players in the European Union and the extent to which they shape the outcome.”⁶ Indeed it can be argued that it is rather difficult to measure the legislative influence of the two main institutions involved in the co-decision procedure, mainly because their influence cannot be assessed only by looking at the formal powers and structures within co-decision procedure. The actual influence exerted by these institutions goes beyond agenda setting and the European Parliament’s quantity of accepted amendments. As Farrell and Heritier have argued, “firstly, the amendments vary greatly in importance. Secondly, a distinction has to be made between amendments in first reading and those in second reading and also the amendments may be not fully but partially accepted.”⁷ In the light of these arguments the authors suggest that a qualitative, rather than a quantitative analysis of the amendments would be more useful.

³ George Tebelis and Geoffrey Garret, “Legislative politics in the European Union”, *European Union Politics*, 2000 , pp. 5-32

⁴ George Tebelis, Christian Jensen, Anastassos Kalandrakis and Amie Kreppel, “Legislative Procedures in the European Union”, *British Journal of Political Science*, vol.31, no. 4, 2001, pp. 573-599

⁵ Shackleton, M, “The Politics of Co-decision”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol.38, No.2, 2000, pp. 325-342

⁶ Torsten J.Selck and Bernard Steunenberg, op. cit. , p. 29

⁷ Henry Farrell and Adrienne Heritier, “The invisible transformation of Co-decision, Problems of Democratic Legitimacy”, *Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies*, 2003, pp. 1-33

If we take a rationalist stance, both, the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament represent institutions that seek to maximize their legislative competences through bargaining. A real measure of their influence would take into account the way they increase their effective competences during the formal and informal institutional negotiation system. Informal dialogues are as important as formal ones because no actor can be perfectly rational but they have “diverse preferences with bounded rationality under serious time constraints”.⁸

One of the most interesting approaches concerning the measurement of the influence exerted by the European Parliaments belongs to Selck and Steunenberg and asserts how difficult it is to distinguish between *power* (combined result of actor’s preferences and capabilities) and *luck* (coincidence masked by the actor’s preferences) in explaining political outcomes if we utilize standard statistical techniques. The authors argue that under the co-decision procedure” in which the European Parliament has more legislative authority, its preferences are relatively more extreme” and thus it” faces more difficulty in reaching an outcome that is close to its most preferred position.”⁹ They conclude that in order to understand legislative decision-making, it is important to take into account the abilities as well as the preferences of the political actors involved.

Whether the European Parliament or the Council has a higher influence within the co-decision procedure is a matter that has been intensively studied over the last decade and the different outcomes depended on which scholarly approach has been utilized in order to study the co-decision procedure. The next section of the study will synthesize the historical evolution of the co-decision procedure and would introduce the main conceptual approaches used to analyze it.

Overview of the co-decision procedure

The Maastricht Treaty in 1993 introduced the co-decision procedure in order to increase the European Parliament’s say in the legislative process, and thus to strengthen the democratic legitimacy of the EU. Initially it applied to 15 areas of Community activity but

⁸ Henry Farrell; Adrienne Héritier, ”Codecision and Institutional Change”, *European University Institute: Roman Schuman Centre Working Papers* , 2006, pp.1-12

⁹ Torsten J.Selck and Bernard Steunenberg, op. cit. pp. 26-32

with the Amsterdam Treaty in 1999, it pertains to 43 areas (including environment, transport, public health, internal market). The Amsterdam Treaty has simplified the co-decision procedure, making it quicker and more effective and strengthening the role of the European Parliament. In 2003, the procedure was used for almost all of the EU laws, with the vast majority of the rest operating under consultation.¹⁰

In its current form, the Conciliation Committee is the final stage of the legislative procedure, if there is no agreed joint text, the proposed legislation lapses. After the Treaty of Nice came into force the simplified co-decision procedure applies to most policy areas. It may therefore be considered a standard legislative procedure.¹¹ The study would not go into detailed description of the co-decision procedure, its functioning can be observed in the co-decision diagram included in annexes (see annex 1).

The co-decision procedure has been criticized for being too complex, confusing and completely lacking in transparency. However, some statistical data regarding the co-decision procedure from May 1999 to December 2006 shows that the relative proportion of files concluding at 1st reading has increased greatly over the reference period, from less than 20% in 1999-2000, to almost 60% in 2006. While the total number of 1st reading deals is increasing dramatically, so too is the length of time needed to achieve such a deal: from 12 months in the last legislature to almost 17 months now. At the same time, the length of a "normal" 1st reading ending in conciliation has hardly increased at all.¹² (See also the chart in the no. 2 annex).

According to a Commission press release in June 2000: "Co-decision have considerably increased the democratic control of European decisions, by enabling Council and Parliament to exercise their powers to the full and by combining the legitimacy of the Member States and that of the assembly directly elected by universal suffrage."¹³ If in practical terms quantitative studies of co-decision show that its success has constantly increased since its entry into force, there are still theoretical debates upon whether its successful expansion came at the expense of the democratic legitimacy of the European

¹⁰ Roger Scully, *The European Parliament*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2003, p. 170

¹¹ Stefan Napel and Mika Widgren, op. cit., p. 131

¹² http://ec.europa.eu/codecision/institutional/index_en.htm , 12. 05. 2011

¹³ <http://www.ena.lu/commission-press-release-codecision-procedure-16-june-2000-020002771.html>, 12. 05. 2011

Union. In this respect, Sherrington differentiates between scholars who focus on the “divisibles and those who prefer to examine the visible effects of the co-decision procedure on inter-institutional relations.”¹⁴

The dichotomy between the two differing conceptual approaches can be roughly related to the distinction between rational and constructivist approaches. While the first approach would emphasize the European Parliaments power to influence and determine the outcome (secure its amendments) of a legislation under co-decision, the second approach would underline the less visible part of co-decision, focusing its analysis on the significance of the informal interaction between the actors during the legislative process. Statistical data also points to an increased number of formal contacts between the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament but it cannot quantify the number of informal meetings and unrecorded meetings of every day politics.¹⁵ The next section of the study will analyze the implications of this informal compromising of the co-decision procedure for the democratic legitimacy of the European Union governance.

The democratic deficit of the European Union

The issue of the democratic deficit within the European Union represents a very complex topic that cannot be entirely covered in this study. As Eriksen and Fossum argued, “there is consensus among analysts and policy-makers that the European Union suffers from a democratic deficit. Analysts have identified this as a multifaced problem, which includes deficiencies in representation and representativeness, accountability, transparency, and legitimacy.”¹⁶ However, not all the analysts and policy-makers share the same concerns regarding the democratic deficit issue. Moravcsik has claimed recently that the “democratic deficit concern is misplaced and that the European Union’s legitimacy crisis is

¹⁴ Philippa Sherrington, *Visible and Divisibles: Institutionalism and the Council of Ministers ten years on*, Paper presented to the European Union Studies Association , Tennessee, 2003, p. 5

¹⁵ Idem, p. 6

¹⁶ Erik Oddvar Eriksen and John Erik Fossum, *Democracy in the European Union, Intergration through deliberation?*, Routledge, London, 2000, p. 5

over-stated, in part given the European Parliament's increasing and progressive input through co-decision."¹⁷

According to Chryssochoou, there are two main perspectives regarding the democratic deficit of the European Union. The first one is the institutional perspective which "focuses on power-sharing and on institutional reform as a solution to the perceived problems of European Union democracy." The second perspective is the socio-psychological one, "which is more concerned with questions of European identity and with the absence of a European demos."¹⁸

For the purpose of this study we would focus more on the co-decision procedure's impact on the main sources of democratic legitimacy. Co-decision procedure was created in order to enhance the democratic legitimacy of the European Union. As Napel and Widgren argue, "The Amsterdam Treaty version of the co-decision gives neither to the European Parliament nor to the Council of Ministers a significant direct procedural advantage"¹⁹ and thus supports the realization of a more democratic legislative system. However, the co-decision procedure reveals several drawbacks which actually sustain the idea of a democratic deficit.

One source of democratic legitimacy within the European Union is represented by the transparency of the legislative process. As Boyron claimed in 1996 in one of the first articles written on co-decision procedure "one cannot deny that the co-decision procedure has increased the power of the European Parliament, but it has also the disadvantage of transmitting the greatest drawback of the Council, its lack of transparency."²⁰ Recently, some measures have been introduced in order to increase the level of transparency of the Council of Ministers. The Seville European Council approved that debates on legislation falling under co-decision procedure will now be open to the public but the public would

¹⁷ Andrew Moravcsik, "In defence of the democratic deficit: Reassessing Legitimacy in the European Union", *JCMS*, vol. 40, no. 4, 2002, pp. 603-634

¹⁸ Dimitris N. Chryssochoou, "The European Synarchy: New Discourses on Sovereignty", *Göttingen Journal of International Law*, 1, 2009, pp. 115-141

¹⁹ Stefan Napel and Mika Widgren, op. cit., p. 150

²⁰ Sophie Boyron, *Maastricht and the Codecision Procedure: A Success Story*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 314.

have access only to the initial stages of the procedure which does not represent a significant improvement in terms of transparency.²¹

Another problem related to transparency is the lack of accountability which derives from the informal negotiation on early agreement dossiers. As Farrell and Héritier argued, the relationship between Council and Parliament involves not only formal meetings but also informal and semi-formal meetings in which many of the real decisions about legislation are taken, with little scope for public oversight.²² An improvement of this issue has been done since it was decided that Council's minutes where a vote has been taken would be open to public, and thus it will be possible to identify who voted against a proposal and who abstained.²³

In terms of legitimacy, the European Parliament is the directly legitimate body of the European Union; while the Council has an indirect legitimacy that allows for certain levels of representations. The undemocratic aspects of co-decision procedure are perceived as referring mainly to the informalities that have been created during the co-decision process and that can become embedded in the procedure. At the moment, the procedural co-decision conditions do not meet the democratic requirements of a deliberative process as long as the procedure largely takes place behind closed doors as a result of the so called informal "trialogues". These informal private meetings include a limited number of participants from the Commission, Council and Parliament, perpetuating an undemocratic deliberation practice.²⁴

Case study: Public access to environmental information

In order to measure the negotiation strength of the European Parliament, and thus the achievement of the Maastricht Treaty concerning its goal to increase the democratic legitimacy of the European Union, the study will analyze the text of a directive regarding

²¹ Council of the European Union Presidency Conclusions. Seville European Council, 21 and 22 June, 2002. Brussels: General Secretariat of the Council, 2002.

²² Henry Farrell; Adrienne Héritier, op. cit., p.8

²³ Philippa Sherrington, "The Council of Ministers and the European Council, in Warleigh", A(ed) *Understanding European Union Institutions*, London, Routledge, 2002, p. 27

²⁴ Anne Elizebeth Stie, "Co-decision- the panacea for EU democracy?", *Center for European Studies*, University of Oslo, 2010, pp.1-308

the public access to environmental information. The directive has been the subject of conciliation and represents a complex case which reveals different opinions from the Council and the European Parliament. The study would combine the quantitative measurement of the European Parliament's amendments with the qualitative analysis of the substance included in the text of the amendments and the degree of disapproval between the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament.

The objective of the Commission's proposal is two-fold. On the one hand, it aims at ensuring a right of access to environmental information held by or for public authorities and to set out the basic terms and conditions of its exercise. On the other hand, it also aims at ensuring that, as a matter of course, environmental information is made available and disseminated to the public, in particular, by means of available computer telecommunications and/or electronic technology.²⁵ The Commission's proposal was presented on 29/06/2000 and the final act was adopted on 28/01/2003. The increased length of discussions illustrates the hard bargaining nature of the negotiations that took place for adopting this directive. After the first reading the European Parliament adopted the report substantially amending the proposal under the co-decision procedure. The 30 amendments that were adopted seek to broaden the definition of public authorities to include natural persons performing administrative functions under national law.²⁶ Of the thirty amendments adopted by Parliament, the Commission's modified legislative proposal accepted in full only one of the European Parliament's amendments and nine amendments were accepted in part. Those amendments which substantially deviated from the Aarhus acquis or which fell outside the scope of the proposal were not accepted.²⁷ The Council's common position, whilst maintaining the approach proposed by the Commission, modifies the provisions of the proposal in order to clarify or to strengthen them in order to make them more feasible. Many modifications aim at re-instating the original text of the Aarhus Convention.²⁸ After the second reading, the European Parliament adopted the report and also adopted several amendments to the Council's common position including one

²⁵ See the Commission proposal (2000), COD/2000/0691.

²⁶ See the Parliament's opinion, 1st reading (2000), COD/2000/0691.

²⁷ See the Commission's modified proposal, (2001), COD/2000/0691.

²⁸ See the Council's common position, (2002), COD/2000/0691 at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52002AG0024:EN:HTML>, 01.06. 2011

amendment that utter the Directive to be evaluated every four years after submission of the relevant reports by the Member States.²⁹ The Commission opinion on the European Parliament position at second reading stated that from the 47 amendments passed by the European Parliament at second reading, 9 can be accepted by the Commission in full, and three in principle. The remaining amendments are rejected.³⁰

Since several amendments were rejected the text went to conciliation. After hard negotiations, the Conciliation Committee finally reached agreement on the directive. The European Parliament adopted a resolution approving the joint text agreed by the Conciliation Committee. The final text which was adopted sets out the basic terms and conditions to grant right of access to environmental information held by or for public authorities and aims to achieve the widest possible systematic availability and dissemination of this type of information to the public.

Moreover, it is aimed at aligning Community law with the provisions of the United Nations/Economic Commission for Europe Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (the so-called "Arhus Convention") with a view to its ratification by the Community. The Convention was adopted on 25 June 1998 in Arhus (Denmark). Sixteen countries are required to ratify, approve, accept or accede to the Convention in order to bring about its entry into force. The act entered into force on 14 February 2003 and it was transposed in 14 February 2005.

Conclusion

After examining the text of the directive we can conclude that the European Parliament had a great impact on this legislative procedure, substantially amending the Commission's proposal at 1st reading and maintaining its position relatively unchanged during the other stages. Moreover, at 2nd reading the European Parliament increased the number of the amendments from 30 to 47 "forcing" the Commission to adopt a higher number of amendments. Overall, it can be concluded that the European Parliament won several amendments and succeeded in having its opinion accepted. Unfortunately, no

²⁹ See EP position at 2nd reading (2002), COD/2000/0691.

³⁰ See Commission's opinion on EP 2nd reading, (2002), COD/2000/0691.

information could be found in order to interpret the formal or informal character of the negotiations. The case study proved the European Parliament's ability to influence the outcome of the adopted text. The premise of this study has been confirmed by the results of the case study and in this particular case it can be stated that the role of the European Parliament has been strengthened by co-decision. However, little could be said regarding the democratic legitimacy of the European Union using the outcome of this analysis. As it has been already stated in the introduction of this study, this case study represents only a sample of a more broad analysis which should utilize not only quantitative methods (the actual number of amendments won by the European Parliament in a significant number of co-decision cases), but also qualitative methods of research (second data sources and observation).

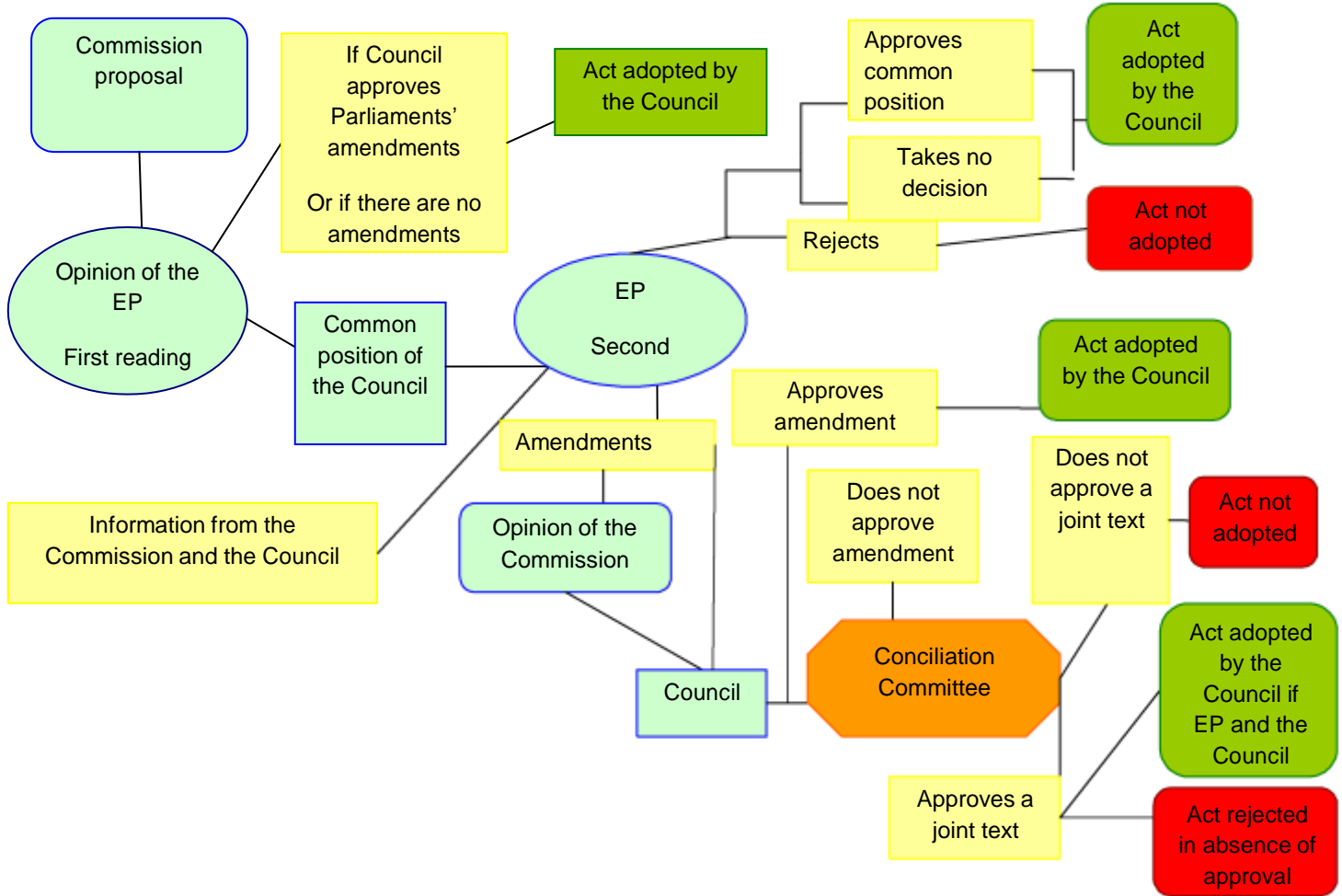
No doubt that the co-decision procedure had far-reaching effects both, on efficiency level of the European Union decision making process and on the internal functioning of the European Parliament. Nevertheless, throughout the years, the procedure developed a series of informal practices that "bypass the formal machinery" leading to an undemocratic legislative process which has been removed from public scrutiny, thus undermining the legitimacy and accountability of the EU system of governance.³¹

To sum up, whereas the role of the European Parliament and its level of interaction with the Council under co-decision procedure have significantly increased (leading to a more efficient decision-making process), it all came at the expense of transparency and accountability regarding this procedure.

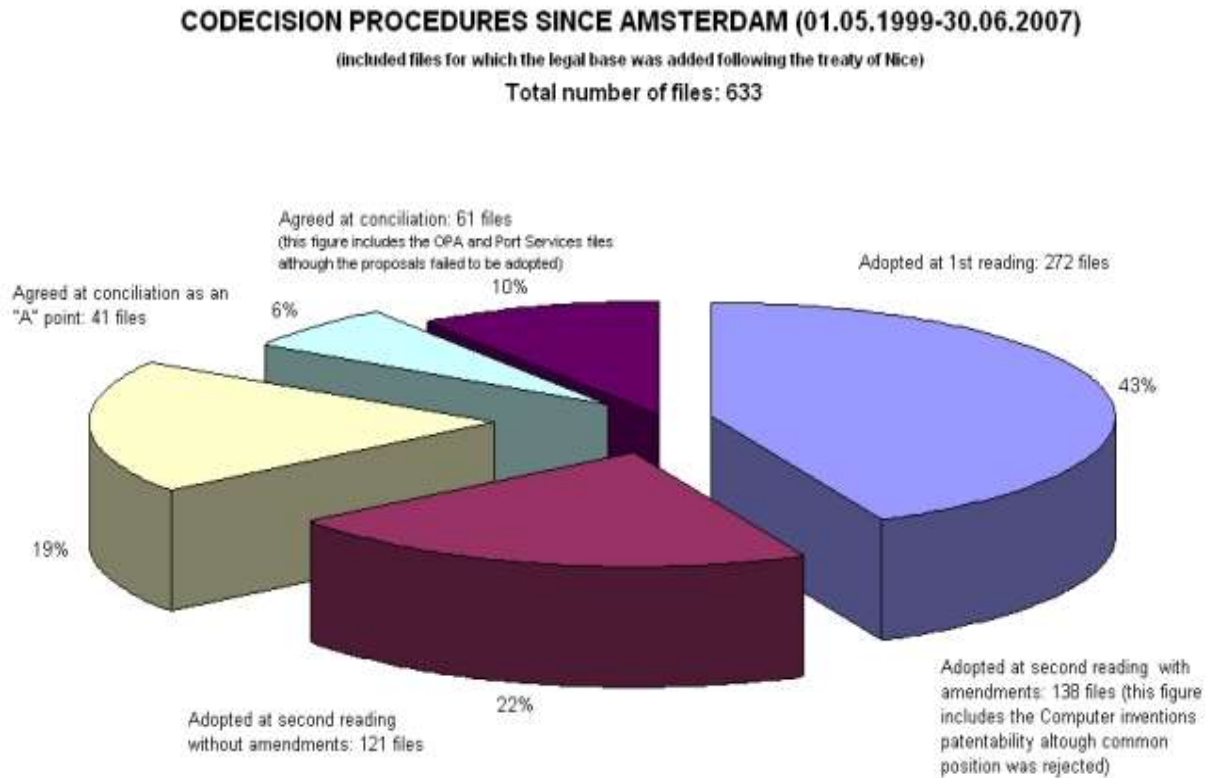
³¹ http://www.europeanfoundation.org/my_weblog/2009/04/eu-co-decision-procedure-the-dismantling-of-democracy.html, 09.07.2011

4. Annexes

1)



2)



Source: http://ec.europa.eu/codecision/institutional/statistics2_en.htm, 13. 11.2011

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22. http://www.europeanfoundation.org/my_weblog/2009/04/eu-co-decision-procedure-the-dismantling-of-democracy.html, 09.07. 2011

Book review: *L'EXTREME GAUCHE EN EUROPE*

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The book *L'extrême gauche en Europe*, written by Christine PINA was published in 2005, at the edition La documentation française. Although it was published in 2005, we consider this book to be essential in understanding the history of left and far-left movements in Europe, their similitude and differences, their ideologies.

The book is, from our point of view, a necessary lecture for specialists and ordinary history consumers. The approach used by the author brings into attention an interesting perspective of the left and far-left movements. As a methodology, Pina uses both qualitative and quantitative methods, insisting more on the first ones. As instruments she uses the comparison, a method that offers important details and confers to the paper a special originality.

The author has manifested preoccupation in the field of political science. Among her papers, we remark *L'extrême gauche en France : entre permanence et évolutions*, *Vote sanction*, *Valeurs des femmes et valeurs des hommes* quelles différences pour les jeunes générations en Europe occidentale.

The book *L'extrême gauche en Europe* is made up of five chapters. The first one, *Les origines de l'extrême gauche européenne* is a radiography of the contemporary far-left starting from the creation of the left movements. The author goes back in time and arrives to Babeuf in order to try to establish the beginning of the left movements. In the same chapter a special importance is offered to the Russian Revolution in 1917. Pina insists on some personalities that in her view need to be mentioned due to the fact that by their opinions marked the left

movements: Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919), Anton Pannekoek (1873-1960), and Georg Lukacs (1885-1971). In the category of anarchists she is interested in Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865) and Alexndrovici Bakunin (1814-1876).

The author considers that Albania and Former Republic of Yugoslavia are study case in the history of Europe as concerns the left movements. Consequently she presents the situation of these two countries from this perspective: the difference between Albania, Yugoslavia and the former soviet states.

The second chapter *L'extrême gauche partisane: diversité des courants...et des contextes* brings into attention the methodological problem that we have to deal with when we speak about the left movements. In author's opinion is important to understand and evaluate the instruments that we operate when we analyze the movement in different countries. Due to the fact that the characteristics of the left parties are not the same in all countries, it is difficult from this point of view to generalize the term and to offer exact definitions and notions. There are some variables that we must take into account. That is why Pina brings into discussion the cases of Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Great Britain, Germany, Spain, Italy, Portugal and France. From these entire examples, we better understand the phenomenon and its particularities in each country.

Chapter three *Aux armes, révolutionnaires! le choix du terrorisme* refers especially to the far-left movements. Italy and Germany are again the study cases for this subject. The students' contestations starting in Germany in 1967 were in fact the fight against the American Imperialism. It is useful to add that the workers joined also the protests. As concerns the Italy, the author considers that the far-left produced more victims than in Germany.

An important chapter is dedicated to the organization of the left. Consequently, the Internationals are analyzed starting with the first International in London, 1864 and arriving to the Fourth International. Pina presents in a very concise manner the tensions, personalities, ideologies of each meeting. If at the beginning, the International was seen as a possible agitator, step by step, until the fourth International, the left movement lost its visibility and the unique organization remained a dream to be accomplished. Developed under the patronage of Trotsky in 1938 the Fourth International marked a break up in the history of international organization of the workers due to the fact that it was impossible to invoke the URSS' origins and its revolutionary experience.

Finally, Pina offers a large space of analysis to France and its left movements. Starting

with the French Revolution and arriving to the election in 2002 the author considers that the far-left has some particularities: at the end of the XXth century it provided an electoral visibility, it also had a capacity to mobilize social movements and to transform them into electoral success and a presence in the Trotsky's organizations.

It remains to the history to show us whether this ideology will gain power or will be left out of history.