

NEW POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES IN A COMPLICATED INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

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Abstract

The present paper is intended as a natural continuation to the study “Public policies and electoral cycles” – a paper presented at Challenges of the Knowledge Society – CKS – 2015.

The evolution and reform of public policies meet new challenges under the social-economic and political conditions of the 2016 electoral year. The year 2016 is electoral in Romania, Austria, the Czech Republic, Ireland, the People’s Republic of China, the Russian Federation as well as in the United States of America – presidential elections. We propose to analyze this year’s probable evolution of public policies. Aside from elections, the governments of several states, as well as the European Union’s structures of leadership, are called to offer viable solutions with which the international arena is confronting; the migrations wave from the Middle East and the refugees’ seemingly impossible integration, the probable economic crisis in China, urgent reforms which must be adopted for an European cohesion.

Keywords: *economic crisis, electoral cycle, public policies, economic sustainability, refugees’ crisis.*

1. Introduction

The evolution and reform of public policies face new challenges in the social-economic and political conditions of the 2016 electoral year. The world economy as a whole is confronting with new and dramatic trials at the beginning of the century. One of the most severe global problems, which we have repeatedly emphasized, is the increasing population on planetary level.

In the common sense, the term policies is usually considered to apply to something “above” particular decisions, but to something “smaller” than general social movements. Thus, policies, in terms of analysis level, is a concept placed in the middle. A second and essential element is that for most authors the term refers to a certain kind of purpose¹. In Romanian language (as well as in all Romance languages) using the expression “public policies” implies a difficulty. Since the term “policy” immediately relates to what we usually call policies²: respectively, the activity of political parties and political people, parliament, government, presidency; in the context of electoral campaigns, **political declarations etc.**

Should we wish to take into consideration the European public policies, which mainly address to the European citizen³, perhaps it would be useful to mainly initiate the study of this article with detailed

analysis of the phenomena and influences on public policies in the European Union.

The year 2016 presents numerous aspects which cause our memory to access the 1912-1914 interval. Major social-economic, political and military tensions manifest on a global scale which are much harder managed by the international community. We thus mention the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, the civil wars in Middle East (Syria and Yemen), the evolutions of raw materials markets which lead to the productions economies’ crisis (petroleum market), the negative evolutions within Asian exchange markets, policies regarding emigration promoted in the European Union, challenges related to international terrorism and, just as important, managing an electoral context in numerous countries. The year 2016 is, simultaneously, the year in which Great Britain will have to decide its European path.

The end of World War I was marked and influenced by the “14 points” stated by the American president Woodrow Wilson in January 1918 which stipulated at the XIV clause the creation of “a state association” envisioned to insure “reciprocal guarantees of security for small and large states⁴”

The purpose was to create a new world, a world of laws and principles. “The world Wilson envisioned was based on principles, not on power, on law instead of interests, and this matter was

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¹ Heclo, H. (1972): “Review Article: Policy Analysis”, in *British Journal of Political Science*, 2, page 83.

² Miroiu, A., *Introduction in the analysis of public politics*, Paideia Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001, page 9.

³ David Weimer, *Ainan Vining in Policy Analysis: Concept and Practice*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N J, 1993.

⁴ Available online at <http://usinfo.org/docs/democracy/51.htm>

equally applied for the winner and loser. [...] The remedy identified by Wilson in collective safety implied the world's nations uniting against aggression, injustice and – perhaps – selfishness excesses. [...] Wilson proposed a world in which resisting in the face of aggression would be based on moral arguments rather than geopolitical⁵. How far have we truly evolved from this moment?

2. Content

The main question of our study is the following: can public policies still save the united European Union's situation through means of their economic, social, agrarian and monetary components? Surely the answer is affirmative at first sight because repeatable history teaches us that Europe has suffered before such catastrophic situations from which not only did it reborn but also managed to develop by inviting new states to adhere to forming a common unit. In the past as well as nowadays, after World War I, Count Richard Nikolaus von Coudenhove-Kalergi, an Austrian publicist and political thinker, foresaw the end of Europe's domination: "the global European hegemony is irredeemably lost". However, Coudenhove-Kalergi was a unique figure, who fought for the European idea from 1992 until his death in 1972, being in the inter-war period in the middle of all initiatives regarding the creation of a united Europe. In 1923, Coudenhove-Kalergi proposes Europe's first project of confederation, a project exposed in the volume *Pan-Europe*. Also in 1923 he creates the *Pan-European Union* – the first non-governmental "europeista" organization of the continent.

For Coudenhove-Kalergi, Europe always was a human brotherhood which shares common visions. The inheritor of a rich culture and grandiose history, Europe, in his vision, will only be able to survive the vicissitude of time if it manages to harmoniously meet the particularities and interests of every nation on the continent. He considered that rejecting any nationalist prejudices, defending freedom and consolidating peace are, along with the reconciliation between France and Germany, the foundation stones for European unity⁶.

A political vision which excluded Russia and Turkey included Island instead. The relation with Great Britain would be a special one, England not being part of Europe unless the improbable situation in which the British Empire falls.

Russia represented, as well as today, a danger for Europe, because a revanchist Russia is defined as

an irreconcilable enemy. It was considered that as soon as Russia recovered from its internal catastrophe, neither Poland, Romania or The Czech Republic would manage to put an end to Russia's advance towards West⁷.

We mention evolution possibilities for an Europe which was developing in 1923, the year in which the Pan European Union was created and followed by a period of 90 years, in which another world war emerged and many other regional wars.

In the period which immediately followed World War I, the Western-European states concentrated their efforts of surpassing the critical situation post-war by applying some Keynesian economic policies, attempting to a larger or smaller extent disturbances which might have intervened as a result of the external environment's influence on their economies which regarded the usage of their own resources or product release on international markets. When the critical economic situation was surpassed and the step towards relaunching economic growth was made, the economic policies applied domestically as well as in relations with the foreign countries, experienced a relative transformation from moderate management towards modern liberalism in the Western area of the continent and from the moderate management towards the extreme one in Central and Eastern Europe.

Based on the structure created in the inter-war period and aiming at eliminating the damages caused by World War II, the economic policies applied in the Western European space were differentiated, continuing the line started in the inter-war period. The European Union's Economy is an economy progressively unified in a natural way as well as through the intense commercial changes developing along the centuries between member states, as well as through the process of formal integration starting in the '50s of the 20th century. The essential characteristic is represented by the cultural diversity which places its mark on the demand's high flexibility as well as on the supply's dimensions and specializations. To this extent even the European Union's economic policies reflect this unity in diversity.

Thus, the European Union's economic policies present the following features⁸:

- Unequal level of development: some common policies, the Common Agricultural Policy or the commercial Policy for example, are complex whether others, such as the regional development Policy or social Policy, developed along three decades, while the cultural Policy or that of

⁵ Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, translation by Mircea Ștefancu, Radu Paraschivescu, BIC ALL Publishing House, Bucharest, 2002, page 195.

⁶ Mihai Sebe, *European Institute in Romania, The idea of Europe in inter-war Romania*, IER studies collection, no. 29, Bucharest, 2010.

⁷ Mihai Sebe, quoted paper.

⁸ Luțaș Mihaela, *Economical and monetary union*, European Institute in Romania, www.ier.ro, Micromonographies Series Economical Politics, 2005.

consumer's safety are recent and insufficiently developed.

- The different type of approaching common policies within the European Union's treaties: thus some policies existed which were not even mentioned in Treaties, but which developed and evolved progressively, for example the policy regarding environment, while others were never applied in spite of being established thoroughly;

- Diversity in establishing and applying common policies: for example, Great Britain, with a prosperous economy, a constant economic growth and an unemployment rate beneath the community average, was interested at the moment of entering the EU, in developing common commercial policies. This fact was able to offer it the possibility of recultivating the productive potential with increased efficiency. Other member states, placed in the phase of reconstruction after the war were interested in developing the productive device;

- The model of integrating on an EU level: some policies are "common to all countries" (such as the Common Agricultural Policy, Commercial Policy or Transportation Policy) meaning that they have completely replaced national policies, whilst others are just complementary to them.

In this context, in March 2010, the European Commission launched the Europe 2020 strategy, for emerging from crisis, thus preparing the EU economy for the following decade's challenges. Europe 2020 takes into consideration the new century's challenges and shapes a perspective that encloses the accomplishment of a high degree of occupying the labor force, creating an economy with low carbon emissions, social productivity and cohesion, objectives which will be reached through concrete actions on an EU level. However, in order to defeat these challenges we either must work harder, better or more intelligently⁹. This task falls on the already fragile shoulders of the young generation, since Europe's future prosperity depends on its younger members. They sum up to approximately 100 million in the EU, or one fifth¹⁰ of Europe's total population. In spite of the opportunities offered by a modern Europe, the young people are presently confronted with high challenges related to educational systems, professional development, access to the labor market etc. Unemployment among young people is unacceptably high, being placed at 21%¹¹. In order to reach the objective of occupying 75% of the labor force for the population situated between the ages of

20 and 64, the young population's transition towards the labor force market must be radically improved. It is estimated that until the year 2020 the working places will require high level qualifications, combined with the capacity to adapt and innovate¹². However, as we presented in previous papers, the entire Europe lacks highly qualified specialists in the ICT domain (information and communications technology). In the EU, less than a person out of three has a higher education degree (31, 1%)¹³, in comparison with over 40% in the USA and over 50% in Japan.

Europe does not lack potential. We have researchers, entrepreneurs and enterprises meeting the global standards, as well as unique qualities which regard values, traditions, creativity and diversity. We have made important progress in creating the largest internal market in the world. European enterprises and civil society are actively engaged in both emerging and developing economies from the entire world. The European Union has approved the objective of occupying the labor force for people of both genders of 75% for the age group of 20-64 until 2020: an ambitious engagement considering the long-lasting European social model and its social security systems. The crisis has reduced the employment levels to 69% and has increased unemployment up to 10%, assuming that the labor force market can stabilize in the near future. The decrease of fertility, on the other hand, determines the active age population in the EU (15-64) to start decreasing in spite of the continuous immigration wave.

The most vulnerable people in our societies have generally been struck by the economic crisis. The situation of those with the smallest wages has continued to deteriorate. Young people, emigrants and those with a low level of qualification, which often depend on temporary and poorly-paid jobs, have been confronting with the largest increase in unemployment. Especially, a young person out of five on the labor market does not have a job; unemployment for citizens outside the EU is 11 percentage points larger than citizens of the EU, and people with a low level of qualification are confronting with a double increase in unemployment.

As it has been possible to observe in recent decades, the intensive usage of global resources has inflicted pressure on our planet and has threatened the security of provision. Keeping our current models of resource usage is out of the question. In the context of these changes, a more efficient usage

⁹ European Commission – communication on behalf of the Commission for the European Parliament, Economical and social european comitee and regions Comittee, a digital agenda for Europe, Bruxelles, 26.08.2010.

¹⁰ Eurostat, 2009, ages between 15 – 30 de ani.

¹¹ Eurostat, June 2010, < 25 years old.

¹² According to Cedefop projections.

¹³ Eurostat, 2008, age group 30 - 34 years old.

of resources will be essential for insuring growth and employment level in Europe. This increase in efficiency will create important economic opportunities, will lead to improving productivity and reducing costs, stimulating competition. New products and services must be developed and new methods of reducing the used resources must be identified.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is one of the first community policies, created with the objective of ensuring the food provisions within the community. CAP represents a set of rules and mechanisms that regulate the production, processing and commercialization of agricultural products in the European Union and that presents an increasing concern towards the rural development.

CAP comprises two pillars¹⁴: a) *common market organizations* (common measures of regulating the functionality of agricultural products markets) and b) *rural development* – structural measures which aim at balanced development of rural areas. CAP has developed starting from the principles for a unique market (agricultural products circulating without restrictions within the EU), community preference (favoring the consumption of original products in the European Union) and financial solidarity (common measures are financed from a common budget). The European Commission presented on October the 12th 2011 a set of regulations which established the legislative frame of CAP for the 2014-2020 period, as well as an evaluation of the impact of certain alternative scenarios regarding political evolution. The legislative package from October 2011 consisted of four proposals of basic regulations for the common agricultural policy regarding: direct payments, an unique common organization of markets (COM), rural development and a horizontal regulation regarding financing, managing and monitoring CAP.

The reform proposals were based on the Communication regarding CAP in the perspective of the year 2020 from October 12th 2011, which emphasized the general policy options meant to respond to the future challenges with which agriculture and rural areas will be confronting and to fulfill the objectives established for CAP, namely:

- Reliable food production;
- Lasting management of natural resources and environmental policies;
- Balanced territorial development.

The legislative package for the cohesion policy, published on October, 6th 2011, included a general regulation for establishing common norms for all funds which are part of the Common Strategic Framework: the European Fund for regional development, the European social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European agricultural Fund for

rural development (EAFRD) and the European Fund for maritime and fishing business. This regulation would allow a better combination of funds regarding a more powerful impact of action.

As well as in the case of other funds, in order to introduce a clearer connection with performance, specific objectives will be required for all programs regarding rural development. One part of the funds (approximately 5%) will be retained in a so-called “performance reserve” and will become available only when it is possible to demonstrate that progress is being made in fulfilling those specific objectives. The rates of co-financing from the EU will amount to 85% in the less developed regions, in outermost regions and in the small islands in the Aegean Sea and to 50% in other regions. For the next financial period (2014 – 2020), the European Commission proposes to allocate 281.8 billion Euros for Pillar I (direct payments) of CAP and 89.9 billion Euros for rural development. The total sum allocated to agriculture reaches 386.9 billion Euros.

In order to define the necessary actions for applying the Europe 2020 Strategy, the European Commission has proposed to reach until 2020, within the EU, the following objectives:

- The employment rate for the population aged between 20 and 64 – 75%;
- The level of investments in research and development – 3% of the EU GDP.
- Reaching the objective “20/20/20” (or 30/20/20, in case of respecting certain conditions) in the field of environmental changes and energy;
- The rate of early school drop-outs – 10%, and the population with a higher education degree, aged between 30 and 34 – minimum 40%;
- Reducing by 20 million the number of European citizens threatened by poverty (which would correspond with a 25% decrease of the number of people that risk poverty).

All these European policies are under close scrutiny at present, due to evolutions at international level:

1. Great Britain’s Brexit.

From the moment Great Britain joined the European space (January 1st 1973), it has had a more pragmatic vision regarding its long-term interest, an interest which aimed at a much more fragile integration than it was wished for in Bruxelles. Great Britain had a different perspective on the monetary policy (rejecting the unique currency proposal, although the economic performances made this matter possible), the agricultural and commercial policies, as well as on people’s free travelling. The degree of British europesimism has always been one of the largest within the member countries. Due to

¹⁴ External affairs ministry, EU politics, common agricultural politics.

last year's evolutions, political forces and significant percentages of the British electorate pressured the British government into organizing a referendum regarding the country's integration in the E.U.

This detachment would have a major economic impact on Great Britain (the loss of approximately 85 billion Euros annually until 2030) and a period of economic slough. If Great Britain maintains its European Union membership, it could reach an economic growth of approximately 1.5% annually in the following years¹⁵.

For or against maintaining the E.U. membership, the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, has placed in front of the Union partners four conditions regarding his support for the referendum which will be organized on June 23rd 2016¹⁶.

- The first condition is related to sovereignty, meaning that increased forces are imposed for national parliaments, which can block the European legislation. Great Britain requires a censorship system, which will permit the member states to modify or reject European directives considered inappropriate. Theoretically, this mechanism should be approved by all member states and not imposed by Great Britain.

- The second condition is related to the Euro Zone and it imposes explicit recollection of the fact that the euro is not the only currency in the EU. This step would insure the states which are not members of the monetary union that they are not disadvantaged. Great Britain wants the states which are not part of the Euro Zone to not be exposed to the effects of a possible fiscal union and to be guaranteed that no contribute will be made to future bailouts.

- The third condition envisions integration. Great Britain wishes it were not obliged to participate in the efforts of constructing a closer Union (The United States of Europe), which in the future could lead to constituting a political Union.

- Finally, the fourth condition is represented by the evolution of social benefits, i.e. restraining the migrants' access to social benefits. Basically, Great Britain wished the requests formulated by those who recently entered the Kingdom could be limited or even blocked, so that they could have access to social benefits 4 years after obtaining residency.

These requirements have been debated during many summits held by the E.U. The leaders of the member-countries reached an agreement, during the meeting in Bruxelles held between February 19th and 20th, 2016 regarding terms of maintaining Great

Britain in the European Union. The debates were difficult since these requirements struck the interests of some of the union's members (especially Eastern countries, with a large number of emigrants towards western areas, including Great Britain). The referendum's result will be vital for the European Union's existence.

2. The evolution of Asian capital markets.

Ever since the beginning of last year (2015), Asian exchange has shown signs of panic regarding the evolution of China's economy and major variations on the petroleum market. Clearly the growth rhythm of Chinese economy has been recording a decreasing trend in recent years. Taking into account the market's dimension and the global influence it manifests, China's economic evolution can generate a new economic crisis on a global scale. The year 2016 has brought in Asia's stock exchanges significant decreases and harsh perspectives regarding the future¹⁷. China's decreasing economy has also accelerated the decreasing price for petroleum, since the Chinese industry's demand has dropped, which were responsible for 15% of the global GDP. To this extent everything is reflected in stock exchange in spite of a relative improvement in the West¹⁸.

3. The refugees' crisis in Europe.

Europe, alongside with the United States, has always represented an El Dorado for populations of poor countries or for refugees in conflict areas. The phenomenon has always been present but in different proportions, depending on the social-economic and political events. The conflict in Syria has emphasized this emigrational tendency without limiting only to people in Syria. The western space mirage has caused inhabitants of the entire Middle East to wish to benefit from the European Union's prosperity.

Europe has always prided itself with its humanitarian tradition of receiving refugees and offering shelter to foreigners that are running from the face of danger and persecutions in their native countries. Today, the governments of European Union states must confront with an increasing number of immigrants, with legal as well as illegal statute in a space which lacks internal frontiers. The governments of the E.U. member states have decided to balance regulations in this matter to the extent of

¹⁵ <http://www.ziare.com/economie/produsul-intern-brut/daca-iese-din-ue-marea-britanie-ar-pierde-o-suma-cat-jumatate-din-pib-ul-romani-ei-1354612>

¹⁶ <http://cursdegovernare.ro/reforma-ue-cele-4-conditii-impuse-de-marea-britanie-pentru-raminerea-in-uniune.html>

¹⁷ <http://www.capital.ro/bursele-asiatice-distruse-dupa-prabusirea-de-ieri-a-pietelor-financiare-internationale-ultimele-evolutii.html>

¹⁸ http://stiri.tvr.ro/incertitudine-la-burse--criza-de-china-trimite-unde-de-soc-in-toata-lumea_64371.html#sthash.4RDSEF0J.dpuf

examining shelter demands according to some basic principles recognized in the entire Union. Thus, minimum common standards have been adopted for accepting those who ask for shelter and for obtaining a statute. A European Office of Shelter Support has been created, with headquarters in Malta, in order to facilitate cooperation between the EU's member states in this domain. Combating a massive flux of illegal seaway immigrants in recent years has become one of the EU's main priorities. The governments of member states are cooperating for bringing human trafficking to an end and for reaching common agreements for repatriating illegal immigrants. Simultaneously, legal immigration is better coordinated through EU regulations regarding family reintegration, long-term residential statute¹⁵. The last UN¹⁹ numbers, not yet published (The Economist), show that Syria's population has reduced to only 16,6 million, from the approximately 22 million levels previous to the war. The opening shown by Germany towards refugees has created a true migration wave in 2015 (over 1.3 million people from Syria and the Middle East have reached Germany or other European states). This situation has challenged the European legislation regarding the Schengen space and the coherency of policies regarding free circulations on European level. Basically, every state placed on the path to Germany has encountered great problems regarding measures of limiting the crisis. The European states start to increase the number of divergent visions regarding the situation and the way to manage it. Eastern and Western Europe regard more and more differently the policies regarding this domain, and the potential quotes of repatriate refugees are rejected by an increasing number of states (Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Romania – up to a certain point also France, are opposing the quota under the form proposed by Germany). Turkey has been suffering the hardest part of the refugees' crisis up until the present, by sheltering over 2 million Syrians and 200,000 Iraqi which had left from the path of violence, more than any other neighbor country of Syria.

The main effects of the refugees' crisis²⁰:

- Modifying policies and regulations in some member states. Each of the member states has a different shelter system, which contributes to the actual border chaos and to 40 warnings launched by the European Commission for the member states regarding the urgent transposing of shelter directives in internal law;
- The crisis' impact on the Schengen space. The European Commission's president accepted

Germany's request to reintroduce temporary controls on the borders with other states members of the EU, particularly at the border with Austria. The possibility of suspending free circulation between the EU's member states and Schengen would be applied for the crisis situations in article 16. The EU has the obligation to insure the proportionality principle for such measures so that the open borders and free circulation will reach normality;

- The crisis impact on the European law regarding shelter and migration. Europe is unable to receive millions of refugees and indeterminately. A common strategy and policy are absolutely imperative. The recently launched European agenda for migration²¹ attempts to systematize an approach leading to the creation of a European law, as well as finding some new measures of preventing and combating illegal migration, which represent a threat on European security. The Dublin Agreement will be revised for the fourth time since it lacks functionality in crisis situations. The commission takes into consideration a unique mechanism of shelter agreement also;

- The crisis' impact on European security. The refugees arriving in Europe are a potential target for being allured by extremist and jihadists networks which act in many European states;

- The crisis' impact on European identity. Many analysts consider that Europe will change radically and will become a Muslim continent if the current European leaders lose control of the immigrants number which arrive from a closed culture, radically different than the European culture. The number of Muslims in Europe in rapport with the total European population was of 7.6% in 2014. The failure of European immigrant's policies so far, from a radicalization perspective, of violent extremism and terrorist attacks within European borders raises serious signs of concern regarding public opinion.

- Economic impact. Economically speaking, the costs for the refugee's wave, their journey to countries which offer shelter followed by costs of integrating them on European labor markets, will probably reach tens of billions of Euros. Only the aid Turkey has already received surpasses 14 billion Euros. On the long term, any European benefit resulted from this afflux is highly unlikely. The experience France has in integrating maghrebian immigrants (started in the '50s last century) at both social and economic levels stimulates a pessimistic view on integration.

In conclusion, the refugees' exodus phenomenon is an aspect which challenges European cohesion and unity.

¹⁹ http://www.euic.mk/content/Brochures-pdf-NEW/EN/12_Lessons_EN.pdf

²⁰ <http://www.contributors.ro/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Pol-Brief-39.pdf>

²¹ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-wedo/policies/european-agendamigration/backgroundinformation/docs/summary_european_agenda_on_migration_e_n.pdf

4. The electoral year 2016.

The year 2016 is electoral in Romania (local and legislative elections), Austria (presidential elections), in the Czech Republic (legislative elections), Ireland (legislative elections), The People's Republic of China (legislative elections), Russian Federation legislative elections) as well as in the United States of America (presidential campaign). What these electoral events have in common is exactly the fact that they are influenced by the above mentioned phenomenon (the refugees' crisis, a possible global crisis and the probable European crisis which might follow the British referendum in June, 23, 2016). Each of these countries' politicians has their own current interests – winning the elections. Populist policies during a crisis have an increased popularity which can lead to wrong long-term solutions. Some of the elections in countries with large global influence (presidential elections in USA, legislative evolutions in Federal Russia, and the Great Britain referendum regarding the country's membership in the European Union) will determine mutations in public policies on a global scale. Political reactions should also be observed within countries from Visegrad (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland), countries which refuse to accept quotas as well as pro-immigration policies. Just as important, a possible new attack following the one which took place in Paris in October 2015, would represent a political and social disaster, with major influences on short term evolutions.

Last year we made the following observation regarding the European Union: as long as states such as Germany exist, well established from economic and political points of view, populism cannot extend.

Unfortunately, today, Germany's policy of open doors, without taking into consideration economic, social, political and religious implications, can lead to phenomena which will endanger the very European Union. Germany is confronting with the government's dramatic decrease in popularity and there are voices asking for additional measures of security for the European Union's external borders in order to maintain the free-circulation within the Schengen space.

5. Conclusions

The elections for both the European Parliament as well as the National Parliament in 2014, in several

countries members of the European Union showed that citizens of the EU's member did not fully trust the future of the European construction²². In the more developed countries, the optimism resists, while in less developed countries affected by crisis, the number of skeptics is significant. Turning a significant part of electorate towards euro-skeptical or nationalist political parties could be interpreted as an answer to the unpopular austerity measures. As surveys of the most recent Eurobarometre²³ show, a large majority of Europeans consider that the European Union is responsible for imposing policies of economic austerity. Fueled by the politicians' populist or radical messages, which are increasingly more popular in a period marked by the economic crisis' effects, the anti-austerity reaction is gradually changing in one or many new ideological movements that nevertheless seem to have a different vision of the European Union's project opposed to the one currently assumed. In the context in which voices, usually singular within the European social model, become increasingly more powerful and with larger echoes within masses, and projects emerged out of radical citizen movements such as Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain, together with nationalist parties such as the National Front in France and UKIP in England, have access to governing or will most likely accede to it in the following elections, according to opinion surveys. We should ask ourselves what we can expect from the dynamic European integration, what it will bring us and where it is heading.

Recent surveys made in member countries of the EU suggest that the Europeans have their trust divided as far as European construction and its leadership are concerned. More than half the Italian citizens are dissatisfied by the EU's leadership performances, according to the Gallup²⁰ survey which has recently been conducted. Some surveys reveal a slight increase in the EU's leadership trust; however it was particularly noticed in countries in which optimism has slowly grown, including the three countries that successfully finalized the salvation program for the sovereign debts crisis, Spain, Portugal and Italy. In 2014 approximately 49% of the EU citizens appreciated the government, a significant increase opposed to 2013, when trust decreased and reached 40%. Trust in leadership remains the lowest in countries under the salvation program, Greece and Cyprus. In 2014, only 23% of Greeks and 28% of Cyprians appreciated the EU's leaders' performances. Thus, the year 2016 of

²² Drd. Cristian Moisoiu "Cetățenii UE sunt divizați în ceea ce privește încrederea în viitorul comunității europene", Institutul de Economie Mondială și cadrul Academiei Române, 2015.

²³ European Commission – Eurobarometer No. 82/2014. Eurobarometru este raportul de anchetă socială al Comisiei Europene, ajuns la numărul 82 și este realizat bianual în 35 de țări sau teritorii, dintre care cele 28 de state membre, 6 țări candidate și comunitatea turcă din Cipru. Eurobarometru 82 a fost efectuat în perioada 8 – 17 noiembrie 2014.

²⁰ sondajul Gallup a fost realizat prin interviuri telefonice sau față în față și s-a derulat în perioada iunie – octombrie 2014. Au fost realizate 1,000 de interviuri în 27 de țări membre UE, cu persoane adulte provenind dintr-un eșantion reprezentativ, cu un nivel de încredere de 95% și o marjă de eroare de ±3%.

legislative elections in a series of European countries determines a dismal perspective in regard to the population's trust in extremist parties. The right extremist Austrian party, Freedom Party, consolidated its position by doubling its result from the previous elections. The problem of political shelter for refugees has played an important role in these elections. The Austrian Institute for Public Opinion Strategies caution that the country's territory is daily entered by thousands of immigrants, the majority of which are from the Middle East, while passing towards Germany and other northern European countries. To this extent, left parties in the Czech Republic have recorded a sudden change for the better in the population's trust especially due to the imposed austerity measures.

Greece, as well as Spain and the recently entered Croatia, are experiencing drastic measures of austerity. Great Britain's concern regarding the Union and euro zone is an element that increases its presence in the European agenda. Limiting the immigrants' access to social aid for a period of 4

years is one of the measures meant to convince the British. A new negotiations project signed by Great Britain and the EU considers that national parliaments of the member states will have the power to block unwanted European laws. Another stipulation in the agreement which will present an interest to Great Britain is that a member state can limit the immigrant workers' access to social aids up to four years. The attempt to convince Great Britain to not leave the European Union is carried out through these proposals.

In this study we have emphasized the European influences on phenomena which mark the current period. We cannot avoid asserting that these influences exceed the European level. They are also not the only elements which will define tomorrow's outcome. The Russian Federation's relations with the West and NATO, China's political, military and economic changes, power rappings in the Middle East and even the evolution of USA – E.U. relations, are elements which can modify the social-economic development on the global level.

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