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Edited by the The Romanian Society for Feminist Analyses AnA, the journal intends to open conversations among eastern and non-eastern feminist researchers on the situated nature of their feminism(s) and to encourage creative and critical feminist debates across multiple axes of signification such as gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, ethnicity, religion, etc.

The journal publishes studies, position papers, case studies, viewpoints, book reviews from practitioners of all grades and professions, academics and other specialists on the broad spectrum of gender and feminist studies.

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Editorial Address:
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Editorial (ENG): International Relations in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe from a Women's Expertise Standpoint

Valentin NICOLESCU

National University of Political Studies and Public Administration

On the 5th of March 2020, at the multi-purpose hall of the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration in Bucharest took place a very special event – the "Romania, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe in the New World (Dis)Order" Conference. It was, as one might have expected, an academic approach to specific issues in international Relations. But it was also a very unusual event, as it aimed to actively challenge the male domination in the IR, security studies and European policies fields, by focusing solely on women's expertise.

Perhaps to the trained eye of the foreign policy and international security expert the issue of gender appears as a marginal component of a vast explicative model centered on concepts like power, winnings, institutions and so forth. That doesn't mean that is almost non-existent, but what it means is that the expert is most probably a man. One does not need to investigate much to get to the conclusion that IR is a profoundly masculinized field of expertise which, as authors like J. Ann Tickner noted, operates with concepts and theoretical models that are a reflection of the embedded machism and which proves to be therefore "blind" to some constitutive aspects of the social reality, as is the case of gender.

The voices of the few women working in the IR area are seldom heard, although their expertise is at least matching that of their male counterparts. This is the environment that convinced university professor Liliana Popescu to organize an event entirely dedicated to women's voices in the field: "We have to learn more about what happens in our region. We have a lot of specialists, may experts in this field of international security, of international relations, of global politics. But I have noticed that, when it comes to the (…) 'heavy' issues present on the international agenda, they are always debated in all-male panels and conferences. I have observed this phenomenon for

some years now. There are countless numbers of women experts in these areas, but they are not visible at all".

The conference thus tried to bring together top women experts from Romania and the region, aiming to enhance their presence in the public sphere, in a field that is traditionally associated with male expertise. At the same time, the event managed to provide new perspectives on issues that are central for a better understanding of the Eastern, South-Eastern and Black Sea European regions and their neighborhood. The subjects discussed were spanning on a wide array of issues, from the crisis of the international liberal order and the emergence of a new world order to the EU reforms, European politics and evolutions that are affecting the region. Also, during the conference the Expertina initiative was presented, a free access database entirely dedicated to the inclusion of women's expertise in the main political and policy debates in Romania, and which at the same time offers a platform for mutual support and empowerment for women for developing advocacy partnerships that would go beyond the 8th of march celebrations.

This issue of Analize – Journal of Gender and Feminist Studies is dedicated to women's expertise by publishing a number of articles that are either based on the presentations made during the conference, or they were written specially on the subject of women's expertise in IR and beyond.

Ana Maria Luca's article tackles with a very interesting issue, that of the South Korean pop culture as a potential vehicle for soft power. Her text presents the results of a field research involving semi-structured interviews with K-pop fans from Romania and the region. In a second step of her analysis, the authoress tries to comparatively explore why China's similar attempts are not replicating the South Korean success.

Alexandra Horobeț analyses the issue of foreign direct investments in Romania within the wider context of the South-East and East European region. Her comparative approach is designed to underline the specificities of the Romanian case and also the challenges to which Romania has to answer in order to be able to take advantage of the existing opportunities.

Anca Dragu discusses the economic growth patterns in the EU after the Green Deal, the transition towards the digital economy and the strengthening of the economic governance. These changes can be both challenges and opportunities for Romania, considers Dragu. From this respect, Romania should strategically focus on the way in which it can augment its business environment

(trough taxation, regulation, increasing stability and predictability) in order to be able to maximize the benefits of the transition to the new economic model envisioned by the EU.

Antonia Colibășanu presents the strategic challenges in the Black Sea region after the Covid-19 pandemic. Her very original approach to the issue consists in following the patterns of international maritime traffic as potentially generating valuable information on future trends and the challenges faced by countries in the region in a post-covid-19 world.

Svetlana Stefanović analyses the European Union – Serbia relation from the perspective of conditionality policy. She presents some of the Western Balkans particularities and difficulties when it comes to the EU integration, with an accent on Serbian case, and last but not least underlines the importance of a new EU leadership that should be "responsible, dedicated and brave, ready to deliver on the issues that really matter to people."

In the context of global unrest regarding structural racism and colonialism, a very important issue is the exclusion of Roma women from the labor market in Romania. Cerasela Bănică analyses the complex interactions between intersectional discrimination and other structural constraints that leads towards a deepening of the challenges Roma women have on the labor market.

Liudmila Nofit's research analyses the future directions in which Moldova's European integration process can take within the wider context of regional and global evolutions. The authoress identifies a series of factors shaping Moldova's route towards integration – Russia's interventionism in the region, the shifting role of the US on the international scene, Eu's institutional crisis.

Ionela Mădălina Dodescu offers an insight from the volunteer's standpoint. She presents her work on media monitoring on the way in which the Romanian media depicts and reflects women's expertise in the public sphere.

Mihaela Pădureanu adds some comments to the debate regarding women's expertise marginalization in the process of foreign policy and international relations decision making in Romania. She uses a set of two main criteria in order to obtain a clearer perspective on the issue: the number of women employed by the key institutions involved in the decision-making process and secondly women's participation to the decision-making process. The authoress critically asserts the male dominance in the field and underlines the fact that, during the covid-19 pandemic women leaders proved time and again to be more effective in managing the crisis.

Ioana Avădanei discusses the way in which women's expertise can and should find her voice and surpass the obstacles raised by masculinized areas of research such as security studies of international relations. Her solutions draw upon public policy (eg introducing gender quotas), education and personal practices.

Another article, written by Valentin Quintus Nicolescu, is a comment on the challenges that the covid-19 pandemic has brought for women experts across the world in the age of post-factual politics.

The last article, that of Ioana Avădani, discusses the fact that female expertise can and must find its voice and overcome the obstacles raised in men dominated fields such as Security Studies or International Relations. Gender sensitive public policies, the focus on education, but also on persoanal practices are seen by the author as solutions in order to overcome gender inequalities.

Editorial (RO): Relațiile Internaționale în Zona Europei de Est și de Sud-Est din Perspectiva Expertizei Femeilor

Valentin NICOLESCU

National University of Political Studies and Public Administration

În data de 5 martie 2020, în sala multifuncțională a Școlii Naționale de Științe Politice și Administrative a avut loc un eveniment special – conferința ”România, Estul și Sud-Estul Europei în noua Dez(ordine) mondială”. A fost, neîndoielnic, vorba despre o abordare academică a unor problematici punctuale ale relațiilor internaționale, însă o abordare absolut deosebită, prin aceea că se dorea (și se dorește) a fi o contestare activă și practică a unei stări de fapt prezente în domeniul studiilor de Securitate, relațiilor internationale sau al politicilor europene – dominanta masculină -, având drept scop principal evidențierea expertizei femeilor.

Probabil că, în ochiul deja format al analistului de politica externă și de Securitate, problematica genului apare, undeva, secundar, ca item intr-o vastă formulă explicativă centrată pe concepte precum puterea, câștigurile, instituțiile etc. Natural însă, asta nu înseamnă că ea este cvasi-inexistentă. Iar acest lucru se întâmplă datorită faptului că respectivul analist este, cel mai probabil, bărbat. O privire sumară asupra domeniului ne arată relativ clar că avem de-a face cu o arie de cercetare profund masculinizată și care, în consecință, așa cum autoare precum J. Ann Tickner au arătat în trecut, operează cu concepte și modele teoretice care reflectă acest machism implicit și care, totodată, se dovedește a fi oarbă la unele aspecte constitutive ale socialului, precum genul. Vocile puținelor femei ce activează în cadrul Relațiilor Internaționale se fac rar auzite, deși expertiza lor este cel puțin egală cu a bărbaților. În acest context, Liliana Popescu, prof. univ. dr și prorector al SNSPA a considerat că un eveniment dedicat în întregime specialistelor în securitate este mai mult decât necesar: ”Trebuie să învățăm mai mult despre ceea ce se întâmplă în regiunea noastră. Avem mulți specialiști, mulți experți în acest domeniu al securității, al relațiilor internaționale, al politicilor globale, dar am observat că, atunci când vine vorba de relațiile internaționale sau de politicile de securitate, (...) subiectele ”grele” de pe agenda internațională

sunt dezbătute în conferințe, paneluri formate exclusiv din bărbați. Am observat asta de-a lungul mai multor ani. Ceea ce vreau să subliniez este că avem nenumărate femei specialiste, experte pe diferite domenii, dar ele nu sunt văzute".

Conferința a adus laolaltă experte de top, din România și din regiunea de Est și SE a Europei, fiind menită să contribuie la afirmarea în spațiul public a expertizei femeilor în domenii asociate în mod tradițional cu expertiza bărbaților. În același timp, conferința a reușit să dezvăluie noi perspective de analiză asupra temelor care au fost discutate și care sunt de o reală importanță pentru înțelegerea regiunii Est și Sud-Estice a Europei, a Mării Negre și a vecinătății sale. Subiectele abordate au variat, de la criza ordinii liberale și dezvoltarea unei noi ordini mondiale la Reformele UE, politica europeană și evoluțiile Uniunii care afectează regiunea. În cadrul conferinței a fost prezentată și inițiativa Expertina, o bază de date gratuită dedicată în întregime includerii expertizei femeilor în principalele dezbateri politice și de politici din România, oferind totodată și o platformă de empowerment și de suport mutual femeilor, încercând să atragă atenția asupra absenței vocilor feminine prin parteneriate de advocacy care să transceandă sărbătoririle de 8 martie.

În cadrul acestui număr al Analize – Journal of Gender and Feminist Studies am ales să publicăm o serie de materiale ce fie au fost prezentate în cadrul evenimentului, fie au fost redactate special pe tema expertizei femeilor, atât în domeniul relațiilor internaționale, dar și dincolo de acestea.

Articolul Anei Maria Luca abordează o problematică extrem de interesantă, cea a culturii pop sud-coreene ca vehicul potențial al *soft power*. Textul este rezultatul unei cercetări de teren în cadrul căreia autoarea a aplicat interviuri semi-structurate comunității fanilor K-pop din România și din regiune. Finalmente, autoarea încearcă să observe de ce succesul K-pop nu este replicat și de încercările similare provenite din China.

Alexandra Horobeț propune o analiză a problematicii investițiilor străine directe în România în contextul mai larg al regiunii sud-est și est-europene. Este un demers comparativ, menit a scoate în evidență specificul cazului românesc și provocările la care România trebuie să răspundă pentru a reuși să fructifice oportunitățile existente.

Anca Dragu aduce în discuție modelele de creștere economică în Uniunea Europeană în contextul adoptării Green Deal, al trecerii la economia digitală și al întăririi guvernanței economice. Schimbările menționate pot fi, consideră Dragu, atât provocări, cât și oportunități

pentru România. Din această perspectivă, România trebuie să se concentreze strategic asupra modului în care poate augmenta mediul de afaceri pentru a-l face mai atractiv (prin regimul de taxare, reglementări, stabilitate, predictibilitate) pentru a maximiza beneficiile tranziției către noul tip de economie menționat anterior.

Articolul Antoniei Colibășanu abordează problema provocărilor strategice din regiunea Mării Negre după pandemia provocată de Covid-19, propunând o abordare inedită, ce urmărește modelele traficului maritim internațional ca generatoare de informații privind trendurile regionale în ceea ce privește provocările cărora țările din regiune vor trebui să le facă față într-o lume post-covid-19.

Svetlana Stefanović analizează relația UE – Serbia în special din perspectiva condiționalității politice. Autoarea prezintă particularitățile Balcanilor de Vest pentru a ne face să înțelegem dificultățile pe care țările din această regiune le întâmpină din perspectiva integrării europene. Nu în ultimă instanță soluția propusă face apel la importanța unui nou sistem de leadership la nivel European, nu leadership "responsabil, dedicat și curajos, gata să se implice în teme care sunt cu adevărat importante pentru cetățeni."

O chestiune extrem de actuală în contextul manifestațiilor globale indreptate împotriva rasismului structural și a colonialismului este cea a excluziunii femeilor rome de pe piața muncii din România. Cerasela Bănică examinează complexul de factori reprezentat de discriminarea intersecțională și o serie de alte constrângeri ce conduc în mod agregat către adâncirea problemelor pe care femeile rome le au pe piața muncii.

Liudmilei Nofit se centrează pe direcțiile pe care le poate lua în viitor procesul de integrare europeană al Republicii Moldova, în contextul mai larg al evoluțiilor regionale și globale. Autoarea identifică și analizează o serie de factori externi ce reprezintă presiuni importante în ceea ce privește direcțiile potențiale le Moldovei – intervenționismul tot mai accentuat al Rusiei în zonă, schimbarea rolului Statelor Unite pe scena internațională, criza instituțională prezentă la nivelul Uniunii Europene.

Ionela Mădălina Dodescu prezintă o foarte interesantă abordare, cea a voluntarei în echipa proiectului căruia îi dedicăm numărul de față. În cadrul articolului, autoarea prezintă rezultatele monitorizării de presă pe care a efectuat-o în cadrul proiectului, ce avea ca temă identificarea modului în care mass media românească reflectă expertiza femeilor în ceea ce privește dezbaterea

unor varii subiecte, ce variază de la cele de politică internă la cele de relații internaționale și studii de securitate.

Mihaela Pădureanu adaugă și ea o serie de comentarii pe marginea marginalizării expertizei femeilor în procesul de luare a deciziilor legate de politica externă și de apărare în România, utilizând două criterii în funcție de care consideră că se poate obține o perspectivă mai clară asupra acestui proces: numărul de angajate femei în instituțiile-cheie de luare a deciziilor, respectiv participarea propriu-zisă la procesul de elaborare a deciziilor de politică externă și securitate. Mihaela Pădureanu analizează critic predominanța masculină în ambele aspecte prezentate mai sus, subliniind că noile condiții create de pandemia generată de covid-19 au dovedit (încă o dată) că, cel puțin la nivel global, femeile aflate la conducerea guvernelor și statelor s-au dovedit mai capabile a gestiona în mod eficient criza decât bărbații.

Penultimul articol este cel al lui Valentin Quintus Nicolescu, și reprezintă un comentariu privind provocările pe care criza covid-19 le aduce expertizei femeilor în această epocă a politicii post-factuale.

Ioana Avădani aduce în discuție modul în care expertiza femeilor poate și trebuie să își găsească vocea și să depășească obstacolele ridicate de domeniile masculinizate precum cel al studiilor de securitate sau al relațiilor internaționale. Soluțiile pe care autoarea le propune se încadrează în câteva direcții: cea de politici publice (eg introducerea cotelor de gen), cea de educație, respectiv cea care vizează aspectele ce țin de practicile personale.

Why is China not sexy?
When Pop Culture Makes Soft Power and when it Doesn't

Ana Maria LUCA
GlobalFocus Center

Abstract:

While Korean popular culture is gaining ground and is able to influence foreign political discourses, mini-markets with Chinese noodles and dumplings do not become third places for groups of C-pop fans who put on Chinese make up, sing Chinese pop songs and eat Chinese noodles. Nor do C-pop and C-drama fans gather in "We love China" cultural associations to spread Chinese culture and language. These cultural activities have been backed by the Chinese state through its Confucius Institutes, but they have not won the hearts and minds of millions of people around the world.

I try to debunk in this research on the Romanian-based Korean and Chinese pop culture fandom the reasons why the same pop culture consumers of Chinese and Korean media products tend to favour the Korean over the Chinese. Based on two concepts, Joseph Nye Jr's soft power from international relations and Michel Foucault's biopower and biopolitics from anthropology, I analyse the reactions of Romanian fans to both currents to point out that gender targeted pop culture using women's bodies to promote political ideas cannot work if they are backed by an authoritarian non-charismatic state.

Keywords: *international relations, cultural studies, China, Korea, soft power, pop culture, biopower, biopolitics*

In spring 2018, a convenience store selling Korean and Japanese products opened in central Bucharest, behind one of the buildings of the city museum. The shop sells various foods produced in South Korea and Japan, including Japanese ramen and Korean ramyeon, nori, frozen dumplings,

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spring rolls, kimchi, noodles, tofu, and even Korean ice-cream. It also sells Korean cosmetics – from lipstick and eyeliner to aloe vera based skin care from Jeju Island – and K-pop albums released by various artists as well as memorabilia.

At the entrance, before picking up a shopping basket, the customer has to go through life-size cardboard effigies of the Bang tan Boys/BTS, one of the most successful Korean boy bands. The shop is more than a minimarket, it is designed as a convenience store in Seoul, South Korea: not only can customers shop and take their products home, but the shop also has a eating area where customers can sit and enjoy a box of freshly prepared instant ramyeon or ramen (depending on the preference) while listening and singing along the most well-known K-pop songs.

By the summer of 2019, the shop had become already a meeting point, a third place for K-pop fans from Bucharest and travellers from other Romanian regions who were K-pop fans and had heard about the shop on vlogs, blogs and other social media groups dedicated to Korean popular culture.

At beginning of 2020, there were scores of Romanian language groups and pages on social media dedicated to Korean pop bands, idols, movies and movies stars, and blogs and vlogs with news on Korean music and dramas, as well as all things Korean, including food recipes, cosmetics and how they're used.

Several online shops had opened delivering Korean food and cosmetics, while other online shops specialized exclusively in Korean cosmetics and other in K-pop bands memorabilia and music albums otherwise not found in the mainstream commercial outlets.

Moreover, several crowdsourced websites with Asian, but predominantly Korean, movies and dramas, had over 200,000 followers. Community members translated drama episodes into Romanian in real time and for free to support each other's passion for Korean actors and Korean culture.

The popularity of the Korean Wave has also brought to spotlight other East Asian pop cultures, including the Chinese. Some also admired Chinese productions and movie stars, often comparing the Chinese productions to their Korean correspondents. Many times, Korean and Chinese moviemakers turn the same novels into televisions or web dramas, which prompt Romanian fans to discuss the topic of C-drama versus K-drama and C-pop versus K-pop.

C-pop, just like K-pop, means billions of dollars: China has a self-sustaining entertainment industry. Chinese internet giant Tencent's four music platforms – QQ Music, Kugou Music, Kuwo

Music and WeSing – have a combined 800 million monthly users, compared to Spotify's 207 million at the beginning of 2019.

Moreover, Beijing has started to invest in foreign policy research and currently funds several doctoral programs at British universities that opened campuses in China in the past few years. The main focus of the programs is to determine how audiences in the countries of the Belt and Road Initiative react to Chinese cinema and television and the political ideas included in the Chinese pop culture project.

C-pop has not generated the same type of soft power as Korean pop culture. At least not yet. According to some insiders, it was because so far, Beijing has not been interested in promoting its entertainment products outside the East and South-East Asian region, where they are already a hit.

However, in the rest of the world where Korean popular culture is gaining ground and is able to influence foreign political scenes, markets with Chinese noodles and dumplings do not become third places for groups of C-pop fans who put on Chinese make up, sing Chinese pop songs and eat Chinese noodles. Nor do C-pop and C-drama fans gather in "We love China" cultural associations to spread Chinese culture and language. These cultural activities have been backed by the Chinese state through its Confucius Institutes, but they have not won the hearts and minds of millions of people around the world.

Korean pop culture is one of the most cited models of soft power in international relations in the age of global information (Nye 2011) (2004) (Lee 2009) (Valieva 2018). Meanwhile, Chinese efforts, which have so far timidly been replicating the Korean policy of investing in the creation and support of an entertainment industry, have not paid off.

Being a Chinese pop culture fan is just not as cool and being a Korean pop culture fan. So why isn't it?

Falling in love with a distant country

The penetration of Korean pop culture, especially K-pop and K-dramas, began with the East Asian markets in the late 1990s, right after the Asian Financial Crisis when the Korean economy was in shambles and the export of popular culture seemed a resource that needed to be exploited (Iwabuchi and Beng Huat 2008).

The rise of the 'Korean Wave' in the new millennium happened as a result of governmental and corporate support (Doobo 2008). The wave started with government's support for the domestic cinema production as a national strategic industry in 1994 as an effect of the liberalization of the media markets in East Asia and the success of US made cinema. Due to the tax incentive, investments of chaebols (Korean conglomerates) facilitated processes of capital accumulation in the media sector but also attracted many talented human resources. At the same time, after the 1990s financial crisis, when Korea's economy took a big hit and it prioritized its media industry, other East Asian countries also liberalized their media markets making it easy for the Korean blockbusters to sell abroad and become a regional phenomenon.

By 2006, Korean media products – K-pop and K-drama became widely consumed in East and South-east Asia and started to spread across the world (Chua and Iwabuchi 2008), creating a mass of fans that not only share the consumption of Korean media products, but also the love for South Korea as a country. It also created a space of debate over the fact that the glocalization of the Korean wave has led to a new form of cultural imperialism by selling not only a Korean dream, but also Korean products and boosting tourism (Kuwahara 2014).

The reason for the success of the Korean Wave, some theorists says, stands not in its "exotic" flavor and the orientalist tendencies in Western societies, but in the fact that the hybridity of the culture makes them easy to digest for foreign audiences which recognize elements from their own popular cultures in them (Molen 2014).

A few years ago, I started to look into why this happens and immersed myself in an Eastern European audience, mostly made of women, who watch dramas produced in east Asian countries, including South Korea, China and Japan.

I've watched since then scores of both Korean and Chinese productions together with fans from cross the region, exchanged opinions with fans, watched reactions to both K-dramas and C-dramas, conducted scores of semi-structured interviews and free discussions with K-pop and K-drama fans in Romania and across the region. Most consume both Korean and Chinese dramas of all kinds – romance, detective stories, sci-fi, fantasy, wuxia (Chinese historical dramas), xienxia (Chinese fantasy dramas). But they just don't feel the same about the Korean and the Chinese.

In the case of Korean popular culture, women across the globe are essential for its geopolitical success. If on June 21, 2020, K-pop fans managed to ruin an electoral rally for US president Donald Trump in Tulsa using their social media networks to call for mass registration

and no-show, it is because millions women and teenagers across the US and other parts of the world have fallen in love with a Korean actor or K-pop idol at a certain point in their lives.

They then researched more about Korean movies, they came to know more about media productions, but also about the country, its history and its current affairs. They have started to search for people and groups with the same passion, they became members of online networks and social media groups where they feel at home speaking about their love story with Korea. They continued to organize and their passion gave way to entrepreneurship - K-beauty and K-food shops, language schools, but also cultural associations that promote Korean culture in their societies.

K-culture fans transform in the end into experts and disseminators of social and political ideas born in South Korea, transmitted through its hybrid popular culture towards millions of consumers of Korean popular culture across the globe who become embodied carriers of ideas and cultural representations to spread in their domestic societies.

The Korean political message included in its successful popular culture is a peaceful one. A short research of the messages spread by K-culture fans across the social media during the COVID pandemic in 2020, reveal that the main message sent to the world is that Korea is a free country and a peaceful democracy, where the state is non-coercive and where society is more organized.

There was wide spread admiration that "Korea is a democracy and Korean people know how to follow safety instructions because they are well educated and know how to give their consent to the state when they need to." Fans posting on Romanian social media also emphasized that Korea, unlike China, hasn't imposed a lockdown on citizens and the measures takes but the state were based on people's consent, not coercion. This was the expression of a democratic state that could be trusted.

> *"This is not to take for granted the fact that Koreans are submissive to the state in any way. Retired people unions would take to the streets to protests a slight decrease in their pensions. Imagine 80-year-old protesting on the streets and, with the filial piety culture that obliges one to respect their elders, imagine the attitude of the law enforcement officers towards the protesters. I think a law enforcement officer got beaten up by one of the retired protesters,"* one of the respondents explained.

Moreover, one former exchange student in Korea who also writes a blog focusing on Korean drama and cinema, explained that she felt compelled to act as an expert on Korean affairs as most Romanian media during the COVID-19 lockdown ran mostly news about China, Europe and the United States.

She also posted several comments and examples of how Korea handled the crisis on her Facebook profile, comparing the measures taken by authorities in Seoul with those taken by the government in Bucharest. Among them, a video recording of a press conference held by the Korean center for Disease Control where the head of the institution, a woman, answered COVID-19 related questions asked by children. She praised the pertinent information praised by authorities and the respect Korean society has for the female head of the state agency.

> *"There is a palpable respect for Jung Eun-Kyeun among the people, who watch with religiosity the KCDC press conferences and closely follow the instructions. Online, (which is, trust me, shocking) users call her 선생님 (seonsaenim, Korean for professor), the highest form of respect someone can be addressed with,"* she wrote.

Another K-drama fan, who spent a vacation alone in South Korea, also said that she followed closely political affairs in the region and also wanted to take a trip to North Korean, which she said she was fascinated by after watching several documentaries and reading books by defectors to South Korea. She said that she finds many similarities between Romania and South Korean society and explained that North Korea is interesting because of Romania's communist past.

> *"I feel that South Korea is what we could be if we just were more organized. It shook a dictatorship practically at the same time and it developed economically much faster than Romania. North Korea is what we could have been if we did not shake the communist regime,"* she explained.

Several K-drama fans I've spoken to also referred to the 2016 - 2017 Candlelight Demonstrations that led to the impeachment of South Korean president Park Geun-hye after

accusations of corruption[1] as a way to stress similarities with Romania and its own anti-corruption protests in 2017. They also highlighted the fact that both countries share the corruption problem.

> "*The difference is that South Korea's government has made a deal with the Chaebols in the 1990s allowing them to function along the old ways in exchange for funding strategic industries at the national level to benefit economic development. It's obviously a model, maybe a better one than dividing society over corruption,"* one respondent explained.

However, beyond the content of the political ideas expressed by respondents, was a common denominator: in all cases their interest in Korea had started with watching K-drama and web-drama on various streaming platforms and it developed into an interest to learn Korean language, visit or study in Korea. Their idea of what Korea is like and how the society functions have been strongly influenced by the media products consumed, whether these are dramas, music, cinema, books or all at the same time.

In fact, according to South Korean political analyst Lee Geun (2009) this is the exact point in the process where popular culture turns into soft power: when the ideas the origin state has been trying to convey to the receiving state are no longer new or exotic, but are normalized in the recipient society.

The COVID crisis when the Korean management model has been applauded at international level because its methods were less coercive and based more on citizen cooperation and community, has sped up the normalization of the idea that South Korean is a strong emerging economy and a peaceful democracy committed to it values. This message is what the European Union has been, for instance, trying to also covey at the international level.

What is Chinese pop culture unable to do?

The answer to the question relies in the last stage of the process the transforms popular culture into soft power.

The fact that South Korea is a democracy that shares freedom of speech and transparency, two values that are globally cherished and are also shared by Romanian society. In many cases,

[1] Kim, Jack, *Thousands protest in South Korea, demand president quit over scandal,* Reuters, October 29, 2016. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southkorea-politics-idUSKCN12T08V, retrieved on June 7, 2020.

especially women over 35, also stressed that it is the main reason they prefer Korean pop culture and media products, although they also consume Chinese pop culture – including *wuxia* (historical dramas and novels) and *xienxia* (fantasy novels).

> *"The fact that Korea is a democracy makes me trust the stories in the movies more and enjoy them more. The fact that I know that China is not a democracy and I know how people live in a communist country because we have lived through that before 1989 in Romania makes me distrust Chinese movies to a certain extent. Also, in comparison to Bollywood dramas, I also prefer the Korean because the culture is closer to ours, it's more Westernized and less entrenched in old traditions,"* a 70-year-old K-drama fan explained.

The question of trust was central to what several interviewees said made them prefer Korean pop culture over any other and most said that trust came from the political ideas which they felt were shared by the culture they were already used to. Young K-pop fans interviewed explained that they felt that in the Chinese bands and movies they consumed there was a certain amount of communist propaganda, conservatism and censorship which they defined as "a certain degree of fake". Korean products they said were closer to Western culture and they could identify more with them especially because they did not feel there was any infringement of liberty outside of the limits of the usual social pressure in any society. They shared the idea that South Korean pop bands, despite the fact that they knew artists have a strict regimen that is sometimes abusive, were not submitted to censorship by an explicit political actor (government institution).

> *"In the Chinese dramas, however cool the topics are, you just see people acting really awkward and naïve. Koreans are simply more genuine,"* a 17-year-old respondent pointed out.

Conclusions

Charm might win over weapons in international relations and soft power might be less damaging that security threats. There is just one problem with this strategy, one that cannot be seen through international relations theories and tools, simply because the field has only recently

started to take into consideration the idea of culture from a holistic perspective rather than the classic narrow view that it only means art and education.

Cultural studies as well as post-colonial thought might not see this wave of charm as legitimate, because the human body, and the woman's body in particular, becomes the object of international power relations.

A woman's most intimate emotions and sensations, her network of friends, her physical body and her environment, become the subject and instrument of international power relations. Michel Foucault spoke in 1990 of biopower as the tendency of states to control on the living (*le vivant*) through regulations and institutions, be it through coercive means or simply through charm.

But constructing of both Nye's soft power idea and Foucault biopower and biopolitics, in the 21st century world weaker states that do not possess the means to exert political influence through hard power tools, countries that don't have strong military or are located at difficult geopolitical crossroads – like South Korea – have no choice but to refer to charm in order to keep safe and have a say in regional politics.

The mechanism of turning Korean popular culture into soft power is dependent largely on instrumentalizing women across the globe, whose experience with consumption of Korean cultural products turn them into experts who can spread information on entertainment industry as well as political information and ideas. Most Korean pop culture fans tend to make an example out of Korea in their home societies and the message that they spread is that the country is a peaceful one. But these ideas would not have reached the home society unless these women were exposed to Korean pop culture, including political ideas, and instrumentalized as such.

Korean soft power through its popular culture remains a perfect example that Foucault's biopower is no longer applied by a hegemon state on a periphery state, but also by states that do not seek to dominate and control the bodies politic of other states, but seek to send out messages of peace and/or boost trade and economy. South Korea is an emerging economy that could not seek world domination, but it has proven time and again in the past years that it can influence political affairs at the highest level though pop culture, like US president Donald Trump's electoral rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma[1] on June 21, 2020.

[1] TikTok Teens and K-Pop Stans Say They Sank Trump Rally, in New York Times, June 21, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/style/tiktok-trump-rally-tulsa.html?smtyp=cur&smid=fb-nytimes&fbclid=IwAR1Brat4KHdZ8V9nuG0y_jcfQ77s8WCNw2oTMDeQ7nusTjJuhpxk7z-wpDQ&fbclid=IwAR2PE77E7y3zBYyAcp2RU7ln9Q6CgsbOJkC_1HVD05PVnxg84VyIAuON8Ec, seen on June 21, 2020

Foucault's principle of biopolitics as the tendency of states to control living bodies still stands; however, the paradigm change occurs now in the means of exercising power – there is no more discipline through punishment of a state that is sovereign, and neither though imposing rules through institutions. Nye's soft power concept comes to complete Foucault's idea of biopolitics: the power over the living body is no longer expressed through coercion, but through charm. At a time when the security expert community speaks of malign influence and hybrid threats, South Korea stands proof that a small country can achieve much more through a different type of "nukes": charming idols and romance dramas.

However, if one looks at the process of learning Korean popular culture, and how it changes one's life, environment, aspirations and social relations, the strategy of producing media content to charm a foreign audience in order to boost a country's image and spread its foreign policy ideas, is as ethical as an emotionally unavailable person seducing and keeping a lover on their toes without committing to a relationship.

K-drama and K-pop fans serve as effective agents for marketing Hallyu and how their fandom empowers them to explore new business and social opportunities. But their bodies are central and become expressions of Korean soft power: they adopt new cultural body practices influenced by Korean pop culture, internalize and recontextualize elements of the culture they consume. The result is that in the society they live in, the act as points of dissemination of ideas, they become fan entrepreneurs and cultural agents transcending different cultural and social contexts (Lyan and Otmazgin 2019)**.**

But China has not been able to follow this model. Beijing cannot project soft power through its popular culture, not because the quality of the media productions is lower than in the case of the Korean ones. As most of the fans explained, the answer is in the political ideas that it is seeking to spread and which do not animate any relations. What the Korean popular culture can do is to create the Korean dream in the minds of women across the globe. A Chinese dream is not possible because of China's lack of political charisma due to its perceived authoritarian government system, its approach to free speech, lack of transparency and minority rights.

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Foreign Direct Investments in Romania: Between Lost Opportunities and Regional Challenges

Alexandra HOROBEȚ

Department of International Business and Economics at

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies

Abstract:

Romania's position in the Central and South-East European region is not necessarily a comfortable one from the FDI perspective. As a late player in relation to inward FDI flows, marked by political and legal instability and a lack of a coherent strategy for attracting FDI, Romania has the lowest FDI stock per capita in the region. Unfortunately, in recent years, a decoupling of wage increases from labor productivity eroded one of the country's significant competitive advantages, and added to the heightened officials' aggressiveness towards foreign investors. If we want to benefit from FDI presence, public policies should be oriented towards a structural and strategic approach aimed at capitalizing on all the opportunities provided by FDI, and focusing on two complementary and mutually enforcing measures: improving the capacity of local companies to "learn" and "absorb" knowledge and technological developments from MNC, but also directing FDI towards activities with high added value. Ultimately, this means less emphasis on incentives for foreign investors and more accent on education, training and regional development.

Keywords: *Foreign direct investments, Romania, Central and Eastern Europe, technological intensity, absorption capacity*

Foreign investments have played a fundamental role in Romania's hard transition from communism to a more developed and sophisticated economy, as well as, incontestably, in the country's affirmation of its European identity. Moreover, this role has not ended yet and is our responsibility to capitalize in the future the many lost opportunities in regards to the presence of

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foreign direct investments (FDI) in the Romanian economy and society as a whole, on one hand, and by intelligently overcoming the numerous challenges that we face at regional level (and not only).

This topic is on the Romanian public agenda for quite a long time, accompanied, unfortunately, by a more hostile attitude towards multinational enterprises in the last 3 years. As an observation, the interest was mostly directed towards the size of FDI flows and stocks and much less towards other attributes of the FDI presence in Romania that need awareness in order to positively transform our relationship to foreign investors, as a host country.

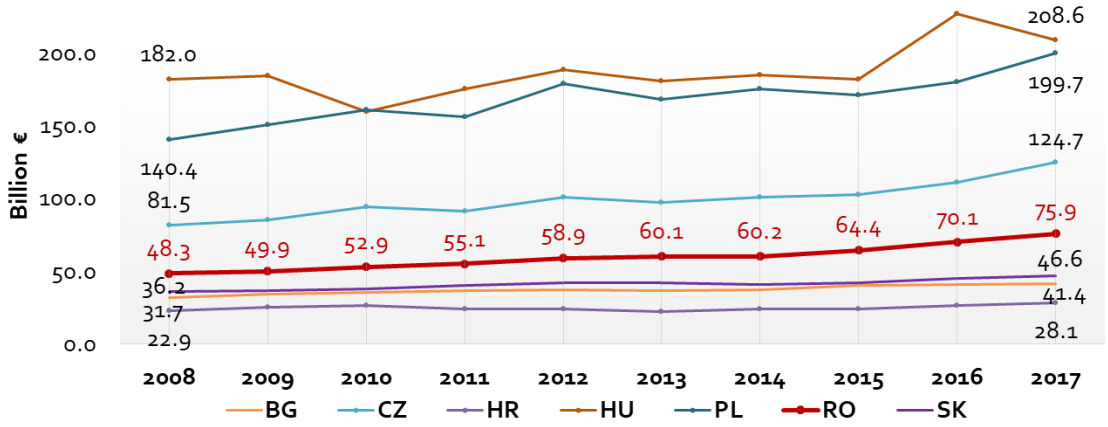
My research on this topic for a number of years has revealed some thought-provoking insights that could form the foundations for a suitable design of supportive FDI public policies in Romania.

Besides a general perception that the FDI received by Romania is high and there is no reason to be concerned, I would like to open the FDI box and briefly explore it from two complementary perspectives: which are the structural attributes of FDI in Romania and where is the country placed in relation to its neighbours - countries with a similar economic and social past, now EU members as well?

The picture of inward FDI in Central and Eastern Europe countries is summarised in Figures 1 and 2. The stock of FDI in Romania reached 81 billion € at the end of 2018, and is almost equally split between equity capital and reinvested earnings. FDI stocks were just over one third of Romania's GDP, on a descending trend as a result of GDP growth. A similar trend is observable for the other countries in the region but FDI stocks are generally above 50% of their GDP (except for Poland and Croatia). Concerning is that countries with lower FDI volumes have a better performance than Romania in attracting FDI. The best times for FDI in Romania were between 2003 and 2008 (before joining the EU and immediately after the accession), when FDI flows rose more than five times. At the end of 2018, FDI companies employed around 1.3 million people, a third of the labour force in the Romanian private sector, with uninterrupted hiring over the years, despite sometimes stagnant turnover. Nearly half of the total FDI was directed to industry – 41%, which means that the investments were significant both in terms of volume and long-term horizon. At present, the share of gross value added of foreign companies exceeds 60% in automotive and

ICT industries, and foreign companies' labour productivity is double compare to that of domestic companies, fuelled by higher investments per employee[1].

Figure 1. Stock of FDI in Central and Eastern Europe countries, 2008-2017



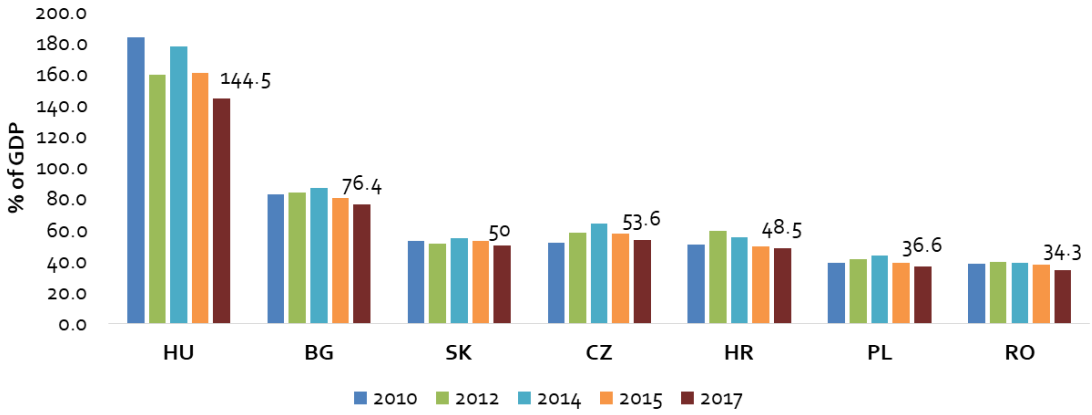
Note: BG – Bulgaria, CZ- Czechia, HR – Croatia, HU – Hungary, PL - Poland, RO – Romania, SK – Slovakia

Data source: Eurostat, National Bank of Romania, UNCTAD

The level of FDI per inhabitant in Romania is significantly below our peers' level – see Figure 3. The good news is that Romania enjoys the highest growth rate in FDI per inhabitant, but the not so pleasant news is that this is also driven by the decrease of the population (Romania's rate of population decline was the highest in the region (-1.26%)). Actually, growing labour shortages as a result of migration and younger people migration, specifically, create a serious challenge for Romania. If we add to this population aging, skills mismatches and a problematic participation in the labour market for women, older people, young people or people from rural areas, the picture is more dramatic.

[1] Alexandra Horobet, Oana Popovici – Investițiile străine directe și importanța lor în România, Studiu Foreign Investors Council and The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, 2017, https://fic.ro/Documents/view/Studiu-Investitiile-straine-directe-evolutia-si-importanta-lor-in-Romania. For more insight into For more insight into FDI in Romania, please see https://fic.ro/investitiile-straine-din-romania, https://fic.ro/Documents/view/Report-Foreign-Direct-Investment-Development-and-Importance-in-Romania.

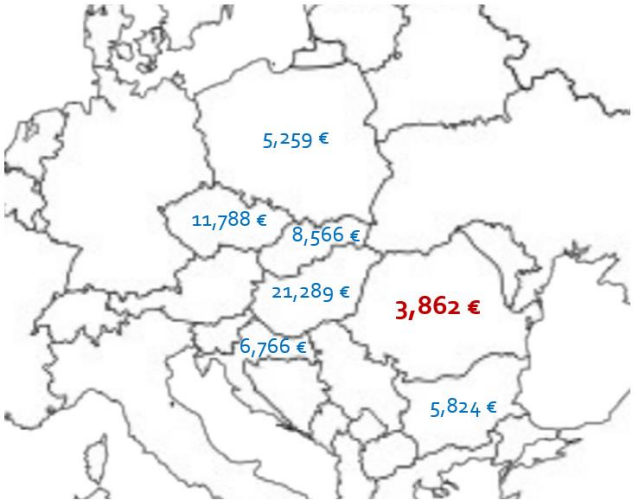
Figure 2. FDI stock as share in GDP (%), Central and Eastern Europe countries - 2010-2017



Note: BG – Bulgaria, CZ- Czechia, HR – Croatia, HU – Hungary, PL - Poland, RO – Romania, SK – Slovakia

Data source: Eurostat, National Bank of Romania, UNCTAD

Figure 3. FDI per inhabitant, Central and Eastern Europe countries - 2017

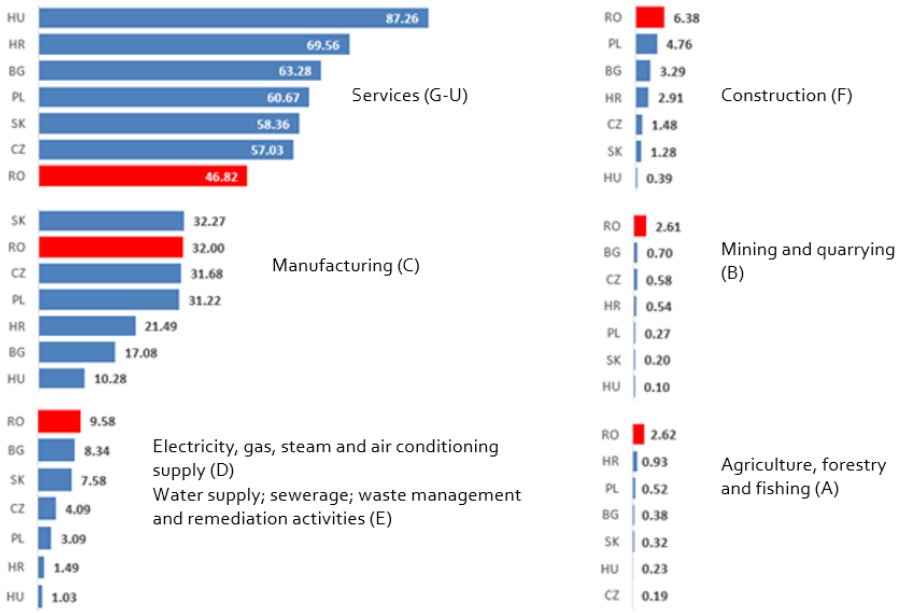


Data source: Eurostat

Romania has a different landscape of FDI stocks' destination by economic activity compared to the countries in the region. Of most concern is our inability to attract FDI towards the services sector – we have the lowest share of FDI compared to our regional peers, almost 47% of the total, with the next ranked country - Czech Republic - ahead of us by more than 10 percentage points and the rest of the countries with much higher weights, even 87%, in the case of Hungary – see Figure 4. Given the global reorientation of FDI flows towards services in the last decades,

largely supported by technological developments, this is an opportunity that we have not been able to fully capitalize so far.

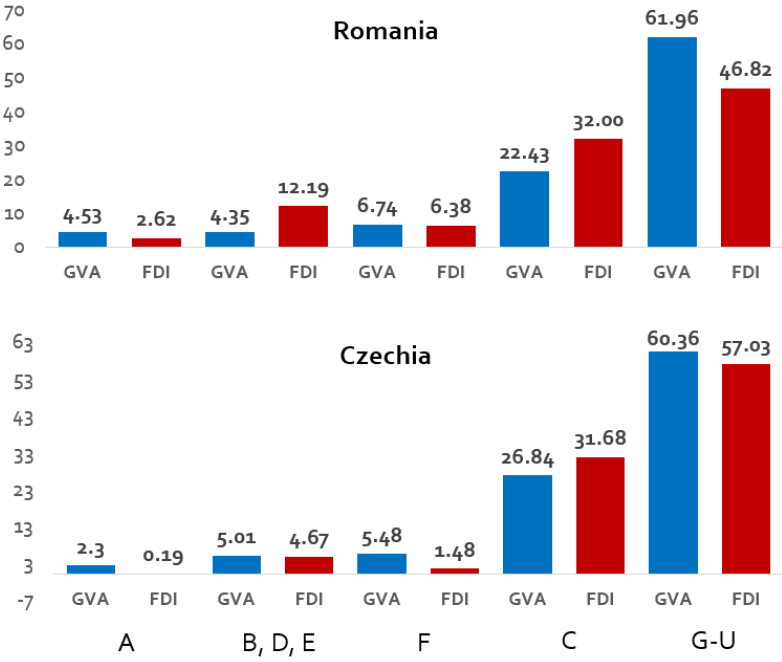
Figure 4. Distribution of FDI stocks across economic sectors (% of total, 2016)



Note: BG – Bulgaria, CZ- Czechia, HR – Croatia, HU – Hungary, PL - Poland, RO – Romania, SK – Slovakia
Data source: Eurostat

I would add to this the conclusions of an analysis of FDI stock distribution across sectors based on the share of Gross value added of these sectors at economy-wide level – and this shows that Romania attracts FDI in low value added sectors, as opposed to the neighbouring countries where FDI are oriented to sectors with a higher contribution to the gross value added – see Figure 5. The graphs show only a comparison with the Czech Republic, but similar conclusions can be drawn when comparing Romania to each of its neighbours.

Figure 5. Gross value added and FDI stocks across economic sectors, 2016



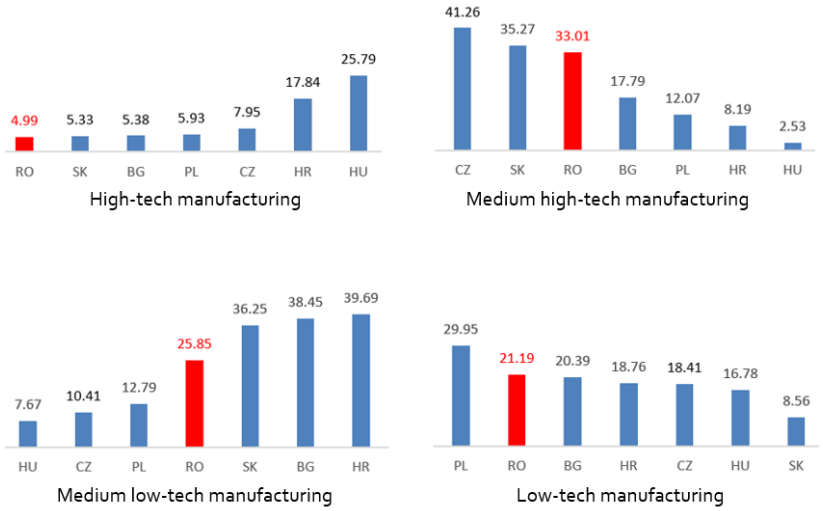
Note: A - Agriculture, forestry and fishing; B - Mining and quarrying; C – Manufacturing; D - Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply, E - Water supply; sewerage; waste management and remediation activities; F – Construction; G-U - Services

Datasource: Eurostat

Another relevant part for the FDI landscape in Romania is that they are oriented towards industrial sectors with a medium to low degree of technological intensity[1]. The medium low-tech (MLT) sector hosts over a quarter of FDI stocks, followed by the low-tech (LT) with over a fifth. In the high-tech (HT) sector, FDI stocks are only 5% of all the FDI stocks in the manufacturing sector, which is the lowest level in the region. In this framework, there is a strong need to stimulate an orientation of FDI towards industries with high technology level, in order to avoid a specialization in industries with low added value and low technological intensity. Entering such a vicious circle will be very difficult to remedy later, also given our neighbours' advancement in this respect.

[1] The European Commission and Eurostat use an aggregation of the manufacturing industry according to technological intensity and based on NACE Rev.2. The manufacturing industries are included in four categories: high-technology, medium high-technology, medium low-technology and low-technology industries. For more information, see https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:High-tech_classification_of_manufacturing_industries and

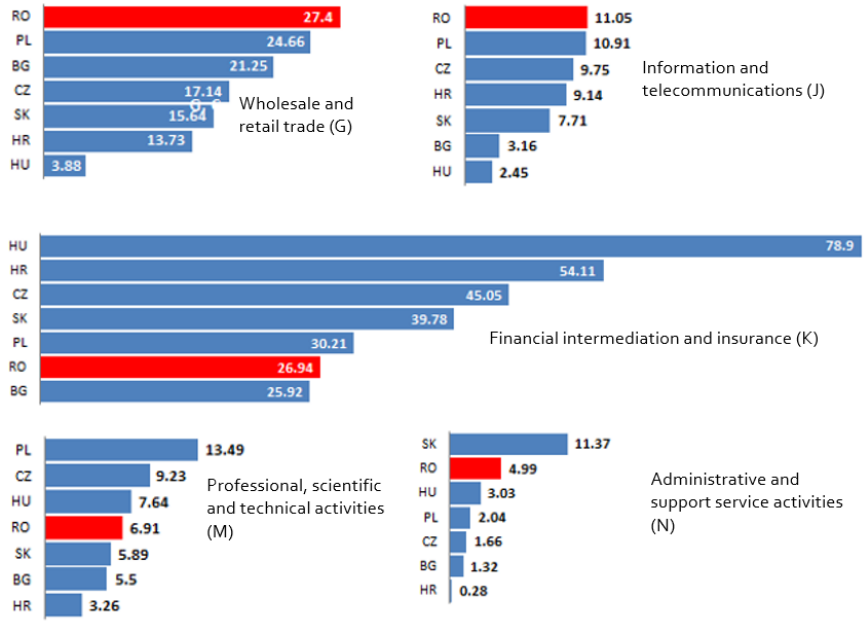
Figure 6. FDI stock in manufacturing industries, based on technological intensity (% of total FDI stock in manufacturing, 2016)



Note: BG – Bulgaria, CZ- Czechia, HR – Croatia, HU – Hungary, PL - Poland, RO – Romania, SK – Slovakia
Data source: Eurostat

Moving to services, the most targeted component by FDI is wholesale and retail trade – and we hold the highest share of FDI in trade in the region (27%), which is, again, one of the least knowledge-intensive services. The second main focus of FDI is financial intermediation and insurance, although with a significantly lower share in total FDI compared to our peers – see Figure 7. The good news coming from the services sector is that Romania holds the highest share of FDI in the Information and Telecommunications sector, included in the category of knowledge-intensive high-tech services. This is explained by the exemption from personal income tax for IT employees, but also by the smaller investment volume needed to start business in this sector - generally, the entry barriers into the industry are relatively low. At the same time, it is questionable whether the tax exemption will endure and whether FDI in this sector will further continue; looking at our regional peers that do not offer FDI such incentives, the answer might be positive, though.

Figure 7. FDI stock in services (% of total FDI stock in services, 2016)

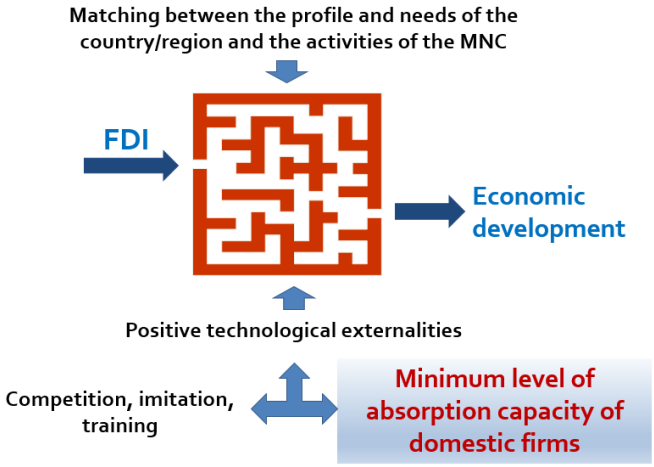


Note: BG – Bulgaria, CZ- Czechia, HR – Croatia, HU – Hungary, PL - Poland, RO – Romania, SK – Slovakia

Data source: Eurostat

FDI flows do not necessarily stimulate economic development if there is no matching between the profile and needs of the country or region and the activities of the MNC. FDI are a mean of transferring technology and knowledge from the parent to the affiliates in the host country and then further to the domestic firms and we know, from existing studies, that positive technological externalities are intensified by competition, imitation and training. BUT they also depend on the technological and social capabilities of the subsidiaries in the host country and of the domestic firms with which they interact. For such effects to occur, a minimum level of absorption capacity of local firms is required – see Figure 8. A high technological gap between local and foreign firms inhibits the positive effects on performance, which means that the ability of domestic firms to decode and use new knowledge elements depends to a large extent on their existing knowledge stock.

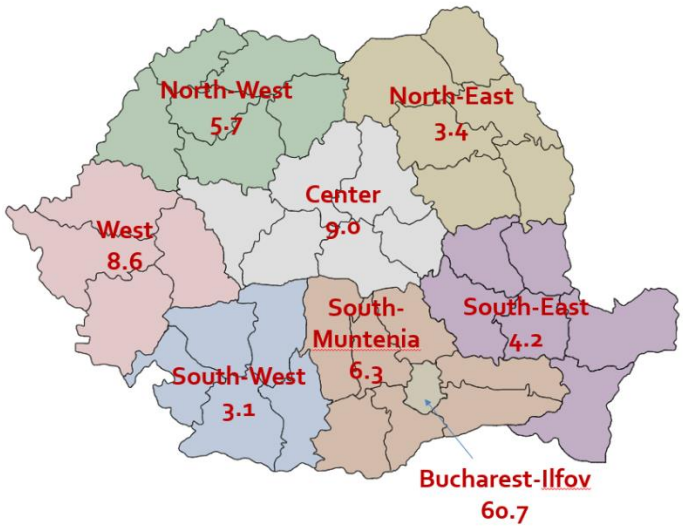
Figure 8. Absorption capacity of FDI – a logical structure



I propose you now to take a look at the FDI stock distribution across Romania's development regions[1] – Figure 9. 60% of the FDI stock is in the Bucharest-Ilfov region, but this is misleading because investment is measured at headquarters' location and most foreign companies are located in Bucharest. After the Bucharest-Ilfov region, most FDI are directed to the Central and Western regions of Romania, due to their proximity to the rest of the EU and the enhanced infrastructure. I would say that this map shows the "regional disorientation" of FDI in Romania, driven by various determinants, of which the most important are the infrastructure lack and quality, workforce migration towards EU and the institutional dysfunctionalities at regional level. Again, all these mean lost opportunities for Romania in its relationship to FDI and in terms of development.

[1] Romania's development regions (8) are included in the EU NUTS classification used to define regional boundaries and determine geographic eligibility for structural and investment funds. For more information, see https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/regions/background

Figure 9. The regional disorientation of FDI in Romania (% of FDI stocks, 2018)



Data source: National Bank of Romania

Qualitative infrastructure is critical for economic growth, and in Romania much still needs to be done to upgrade the country's infrastructure to European standards. Although all governments have declaratively acknowledged the important role that infrastructure plays, the pace of progress has been extremely slow, given the low absorption of EU funds for this purpose and the limited state budget funds that can be allocated. The lack of a proper infrastructure resulted in missed foreign investments – maybe the best examples are the Renault factory opened in Tanger (Morocco) and the Mercedes-Benz investment in Kecskemet (Hungary in 2016), but there is a long list of companies that have considered Romania as a possible investment location and have decided, eventually, to locate their new production facilities in other countries in the region). Over the medium and long-term, this major deficiency creates a strong liability for Romania in the competition towards attracting FDI and not only.

Research has documented the so-called "agglomeration effect", as MNCs tend to locate their activities in areas where other companies are already present (either a "follow the leader" FDI or FDI reassured by the others' presence in a host country)[1]. At regional level this is seen in the existence of well-specialized regions in terms of sector or industry. While for the industry are

[1] Jones, J. (2017) Agglomeration economies and the location of foreign direct investment: A meta-analysis, Journal of Regional Science, 5, 731-757; Barry, F., Görg, H., Strobl, E. (2003) Foreign direct investment, agglomerations, and demonstration effects: An empirical investigation, *Review of World Economics*, 139, 583-600; Barrell, R., Pain. N. (1999) Domestic institutions, agglomerations and foreign direct investment in Europe, European Economic Review, 43, 925-934;

attractive the regions that have a higher concentration of companies operating in the same sector, for services concentration is usually in prosperous areas, benefiting from highly skilled workforce and knowledge-intensive services. This generates a lost opportunity for Romania.

In this framework there is no surprise to discover that Romanian regions are all below the EU average in terms of their competitiveness (as revealed by the most recent European Regional Competitiveness Index[1]) – with only 4 out of 8 improving their competitiveness compared to 2016. True, a similar pattern is valid for all regions in CEE, with the exception of capital regions in Poland and Czech Republic and of another Czech region.

There are many explanations that can be advanced for the existing state of FDI in Romania, in terms of both size and structure. I would mention just a few more, adding to the previously discussed ones:

- Romania was a late player in the CEE region in relation to FDI, due to the effective opening of the country towards foreign investors at the end of the '90s; this meant that FDI were benefiting from the other countries' competitive advantages first and only later they "discovered" Romania
- Political and legal instability was a rather permanent issue before 2000 (just remember the turbulent 1996-2000 period, a lost one from nay perspectives), but, recently, legal instability was coupled with legal aggressiveness towards the business environment in general and the foreign investors in particular (I think we all remember the hostile discourses against MNCs in the last three years)
- The wage policies in the same last three years, focused on wages increases decoupled from labour productivity eroded significantly one of the competitive advantages that the country enjoyed, in the form of workforce lower cost
- And, in the end, Romania never had a coherent strategy for attracting FDI, either in sectorial/industrial terms or in regional terms. To a large extent, all FDI were equally treated, disregarding their size, orientation and potential effects in the economy (positive or negative). True, there were various explicit incentives awarded to foreign investors (and promises, some of them unaccomplished), but no long-term vision over how to benefit from the FDI presence has never existed.

[1] https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/working-papers/2019/the-european-regional-competitiveness-index-2019

The impact of FDI on any host country's economy is felt directly or indirectly – directly, by providing jobs in the economy, creating new production capacities and the taxes paid to the state budget; indirectly, by exposing local companies to advanced technologies, as well as to knowledge and management practices, transmitted by multinational corporations. This transmission takes place through demonstration effects, through integrating local companies in value added chains and through competition. If we want to benefit from FDI presence, the design of public policies needs to be oriented not only towards increasing the stock of FDI, which is a desirable goal in a first phase of attracting FDI, but, more importantly, towards a structural and strategic approach aimed at capitalizing on all the opportunities provided by FDI. This request a focus on two complementary and mutually enforcing measures, which influence each other: improving the capacity of local companies to "learn" and "absorb" knowledge and technological developments from MNC, but also directing FDI to activities with high added value. Doing so means less emphasis on incentives for foreign investors and more accent on education, training and regional development.

Last, but not least: Romania's position is the South-East European region is not necessarily a comfortable one from the FDI perspective. Besides the traditional competitors in the CEE, EU members now, we should not forget other neighbours that are not EU members but aim towards membership (Western Balkans, Serbia, Ukraine, Moldova), but also more distant players such as the Caspian Sea countries, that address foreign investors with competitive advantages not easy to ignore: lower labour costs, big markets and natural resources.

I would like to end my paper with a little insight from my research into the Renault investment in Mioveni a few years ago[1]. I asked Dacia-Renault's CFP which was the most difficult thing Renault had to deal with after purchasing Dacia. To my surprise, he said "taking the hammers out" – at the time, no one could find two identical Dacia cars, since the mechanics were adjusting everything using their hammers. All the hammers were out in three years, which is quite a long time. I hope that it will take us less than three years to design and to start implementing the needed strategy towards FDI that could address many of the challenges we face.

[1] https://fic.ro/Documents/view/Report-Foreign-Direct-Investment-Development-and-Importance-in-Romania

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New Challenges at the Level of the EU: Green Deal and Economic Governance after Pandemic

Anca DRAGU

EON Romania

Abstract:

Public policies of each country are modeling economic growth based on resources, economic conditions and, especially, aspirations. In some countries, economic growth is just happing, while other countries are pursuing clear objectives. For the last couple of centuries, economic growth followed a quantitative objective and ignored the qualitative features of growth, ignoring environment and social policies. As a consequence, growth models departed from the nowadays long-term objectives of building sustainable, green, inclusive and smart economic activity.

The new millennium arrived with an ambitious agenda regarding the sustainability of growth model, while the new Commission provoked the EU Member States to a new economic paradigm, where the green economy and digitalization are taking the driving seats of the European growth models. The health crisis caused by the new Coronavirus pandemic revealed the shortcomings of the current economic model – long production chains and, in many cases, weak economic governance. For many EU member states, the requirements of the green economy – the Green Deal - the digitalization and the need of strengthening economic governance are a big challenge that should be solved together, over medium and long term.

Key words: *Green Deal, health crisis, economic governance, European Union*

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I. Approach to economic growth: from classic to modern

Economic growth was born and have become a preoccupation of economists after the industrial revolution. Angus Magnus[1] shows that over the last millennium, from the year 1000 to 1820 the advance in per capita income was a slow crawl — the world average rose about 50 per cent. Most of the growth went to accommodate a fourfold increase in population. Since 1820, world development has been much more dynamic. Per capita income rose more than eightfold, population more than fivefold. But not all countries advanced in the same pace and regional gaps have deepened.

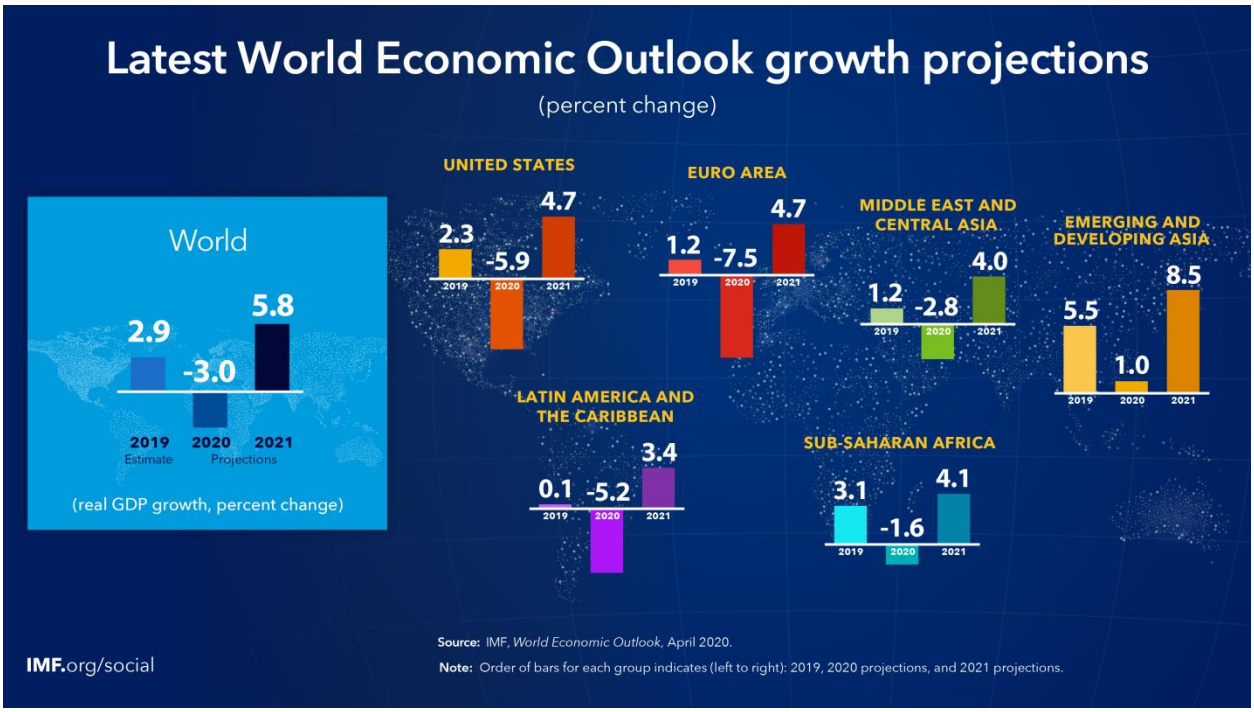
Countries that invested in new technologies saw immediate results in terms of rapid growth and higher competitiveness, becoming regional and world economic leaders. They set up institutions able to handle and to stimulate the development and the use of new technologies, also to internalize in the daily activity for increasing exponentially productivity. These countries won the gamble of the steam engine and they are leading the platoon.

However, growth models have ignored two dimensions: **environment and people**. In this process of higher and higher growth, protecting environment was only marginally considered until the beginning of the new millennium, while economic and social inclusion was labeled as leftish political ideology. But over the last 20-30 years, the concept of economic growth by all costs was replaced by the concept of green, smart, inclusive and sustainable growth. Otherwise, individuals and societies cannot develop nor become better.

Some countries considered research and education important factors in their equation of growth, stimulating quality supply side and equity; other countries, pursued quick (political) wins and focused on demand side, stimulating consumption based on debt. There is a strong correlation between innovation and R&D and environment and long-term sustainable growth[2]. Therefore, in 2018, The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel was shared between William D. Nordhaus "for integrating climate change into long-run macroeconomic analysis" and Paul M. Romer "for integrating technological innovations into long-run macroeconomic analysis."

[1] Angus Maddison, The World Economy: a millennial perspective, 2001, OECD;
[2] See JRC (2019): 2035 – Paths towards a sustainable EU economy. Sustainable transition and the potential of eco-innovation for jobs and economic development in EU eco-industries 2035

Irrespective of the growth model, the beginning of the year 2020 shut down the world economy. A new pandemic forced numerous companies world-wide to shut down, shrinking the global growth for 2020 to -3% (forecast)[1]. For Romania, the growth is projected to fall to -5% this year, while next year economic activity may recover to over 4%. For the first time since the Great Depression in the 30's of last century, both advanced and emerging economies will be in recession. In 2021, the global economy is projected to grow by 5.8%, under the assumption that the economic activity normalizes, and policy support will have been offered. The risks to this scenario remain high and uncontrollable, depending on the success in controlling the virus spread, the identification of the right cure, the discovery, testing and production of a new vaccine, the properly equipped hospitals and the availability of financial resources for all these.



Globalization is questioned. The Great Lockdown revealed the limitations of the long supply chains, the paradigm of the modern economy and the underlying factor of higher productivity and higher margins. Most European goods producers relocated partially or entirely their production in Asia, mainly in China. Therefore, over the last 10 years, also helped by the devaluating exchange rate policy, the Chinese exports doubled to 2.5 trillion USD, 10 times more

[1] IMF, World Economic Outlook, April 2020

than exports of Australia or Saudi Arabia. "Made in China" label became part of our lives, when talking about cloths but increasingly on equipment and high-tech. In case of Europe, shortening production chains would mean relocating polluting industry from China to Europe, while observing all rules related to taxes, labor force and social security. This would translate into an increase of prices for products relocated from China to the EU or accession countries. However, the need to observe the EU rules, especially on pollution, for example, should boost up research for greener technologies, just in line with the new EU objectives on a smarter and digital economy. Overall, a coherent economic policy would result in smart and clean economy on long term, which could offset the immediate negative impact of the price increase.

The Great Lockdown and the negative economic shock determined the European Commission to design new policies and instruments. In May 2020, a new recovery plan and a development package, together with financial resources were presented by the Commission. The EU budget was boosted by **Next Generation EU**[1], an emergency temporary recovery instrument, to help repair the immediate economic and social damage brought by the coronavirus pandemic, kickstart the recovery and prepare for a better future for the next generation. This proposal builds on the 2018 Commission's proposal and on the considerable progress that has already been made in the European Parliament and the Council. To ensure an effective implementation of the **Recovery Plan,** which reaches out to everybody in the EU and to our global partners, the Commission is mobilizing a variety of instruments, consisting in grants, loans and guarantees.

II. The EU Green Deal – a project for the next 30 years

Scientists have warned over the risk of climate change if pollution is not contained and reduced. More economic activity, more employment, higher trade and salaries with more pollution is an unsustainable economic model that is leading to self-destruction over the long term. Green political parties have emerged in Northern Europe, reflecting a higher level of understanding of economic and social challenges, as well as better standards of living. It is unrealistic to believe that individuals facing poverty are preoccupied by luxury and untouchable goods, such as quality of air, heritage of our children etc.

[1] European Commission (2020): Europe's moment – repair and prepare for the next generation, avilable at https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_940

The ambition of the Green Deal is that until 2050, human activity does not hurt nature and environment. In other words, the trace of carbon dioxide left by humans should not exceed the capability of environment to absorb it, conducting an environmentally neutral activity. It means that current economic sectors which are polluting – transport, energy, construction building, agriculture, chemical industry etc. – should significantly increase investments for reshaping towards an environment neutral activity.

> *The main goals for 2030 are: reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% (compared to 1990 levels); at least 32% share of renewable energy and improving energy efficiency by at least 32.5%.*

Financing the Green Deal will combine EU grants, national co-financing, private money and additional financing schemes for the private sector. The Deal requires at least 1,000 billion EUR over the next decade in investments, in a combination of EU budget funds, plus additional public and private investments engaged by these funds. The EU budget for climate and environment expenditure in the period of 2021-2030 will reach over 500 billion EUR, meaning 25% of the 2021-2027 multi-annual financial framework (MFF). This amount will be top up by an additional 114 billion EUR national co-financing for climate and environment in that period. The **InvestEU** fund is a more sophisticated financial instrument that will engage private and public climate and environment-related investments amounting to about 279 billion EUR during 2021-2030, by supplying a guarantee from the EU budget in order to reduce the risk of the financing and investment operations. This instrument would be less feasible for emerging EU economies, including Romania, whose financial sectors and mechanisms are less sophisticated.

In order to contain negative shocks for business and individuals in the process towards a greener economy, **The Just Transition Mechanism** will include financing from the EU budget, co-financing from the Member States, and contributions from InvestEU and the European Investment Bank (EIB) to get to 100 billion EUR investments engaged in the period of 2021-2027, which, extrapolated over a 10-year period, will get to 143 billion EUR, thus ensuring a just transition.

Current system of taxing polluters through the carbon dioxide emission certificates, introduced by the Emission Certificate Trading System (ECTS) will also contribute to financing

the transition. Thus, the Innovation Fund and the Modernisation Fund, which are not part of the EU budget, but are funded from part of the revenues obtained from carbon dioxide emission certificate auctioning within the Emission Certificate Trading System, will provide at least 25 billion EUR for the EU's transition to climate neutrality.

Romania must focus intensively on the consequences of the Green Deal by the European Commission. There are risks, but there are opportunities as well. Romania needs to solve the issue of outdated, polluting generation capacities that must be revamped or replaced with clean generation sources. A large percent of about 25-30% of Romania's energy mix is still based on coal. Furthermore, we see stagnation of investments in the area of wind-based generation, and prosumers - the new players on the market - are still at an early phase. Investments in grids are highly needed but they require a new wave of smart rules and regulations.

At the same time, the EC invited Member States to identify challenged regions that need money and practical support, and work with the Commission to produce a practical change plan. The European Commission has included a European Just Transition Mechanism, particularly dedicated to coal-producing regions such as Valea Jiului or the Oltenia region. The Mechanism intends to generate investments amounting to 100 billion EUR in the next 7 years and 143 billion EUR in the next 10 years through non-reimbursable European funds, but also through special crediting lines. Romania is among the main beneficiaries of the Just Transition Mechanism, which is meant to help Europe reach climate neutrality by 2050 according to the Commission's estimations presented to the EU Member States. According to some preliminary estimations, Poland would be the main beneficiary of the Mechanism, as it would benefit from investments amounting to approximately 27 billion EUR. Poland is followed by Germany, with investments of 13.4 billion EUR; Romania with 10.1 billion EUR, and the Czech Republic with 7.8 billion EUR.

However, Romania should pay attention to how appealing the business environment is (taxation regime; regulations; stability; predictability) and be aware all the time that it is competing with other countries in attracting and keeping investors here. Investing in revamping the existing production capacities is key, in parallel with investing in new, efficient, environment-friendly production capacities.

The energy transition will obviously have a considerable impact on some coal-based producers and industries and on some coal-producing regions. The restructuring of the energy sector and the change of the energy mix have already driven job losses in such regions of Europe

and in Romania as well, and this is a trend that cannot be avoided in the future. It is very important that we anticipate the structural changes of the energy sector early, and approach such changes through clear, lasting policies, in order to reduce and mitigate the economic and social impact as much as possible.

The investment plan under the Green Pact envisages a review of the relevant **state aid norms** by 2021. Thus, the intent is to encourage innovation and implementation of new, environment-friendly technologies on a commercial scale.

The use of **green taxation as a tool to change behavior and generate revenue remains modest**. Environmental taxes, as well as different forms of carbon pricing, are important policy instruments to achieve the required transition. A significant price on carbon dioxide emissions has been a key feature of Swedish climate policy since 2015 and now covers about 40% of Swedish greenhouse gas emission, helping Sweden to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in sectors not covered by the EU Emissions Trading System, while keeping the economy growing. Other Member States, including Ireland, Denmark, France, Finland, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, Poland and Portugal also apply a carbon tax. In Ireland all revenues from a recent price increase in the carbon tax (around 90 million EUR in 2020) will be fully allocated to climate-related spending. Part of them (6 million EUR) will be used to establishing an Irish 'Just Transition Fund' for the Midlands – covering investment in retraining and reskilling and helping local communities and businesses to adjust to the low carbon transition.

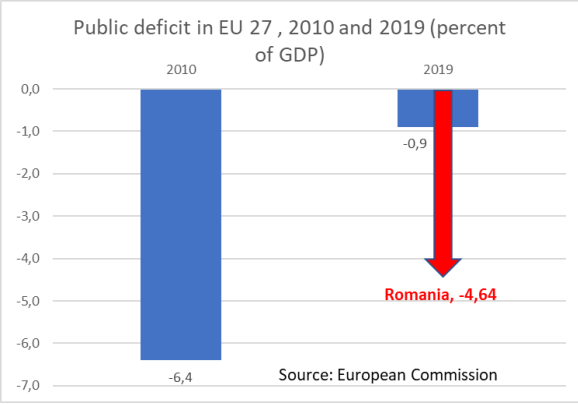
III. What about economic governance?

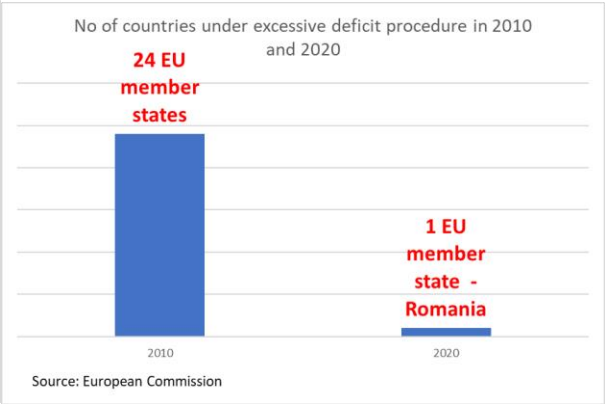
Since 1992, the European Union introduced stricter rules for economic governance through the Maastricht Treaty. It established that the deficit of the general government should be below 3% of GDP, and the public debt should stay below 60% of GDP. Five years later, in 1997, rules of the Maastricht Treaty are strengthened through the Stability and Growth Pact. It also provides a clearer and enforced framework for monitoring and coordination of national fiscal and economic policies to ensure sustainable growth and economic convergence of all member states. The severe crisis of 2008-2009 reveled macroeconomic weaknesses of the economic governance in many EU countries. The situation called for stronger and more refined rules of economic governance, enforced through the so-called Six-pack and two-pack legislation. The new rules

targeted fiscal surveillance and broadened the scope of the surveillance to include macroeconomic imbalances and their adjustment.

The new Commission is also looking at economic governance rules. Not because it is not needed, anymore, but because some objectives have been reached while for other objectives there is need of more ownership from each government. Economic governance has not become obsolete, a stranded asset but it needs to be reinforced and truly believed. Faking economic governance is not an option. Moreover, the pandemic induced new internal and external macroeconomic imbalances in most of the Member States, exacerbating those already existing prior the health crisis.

The Great Lockdown worsened the macroeconomic conditions more than the previous economic crisis (2008-2009). The economic crisis deteriorated the fiscal stance in most of the EU member states, where an average budget deficit reached 6.9% of GDP, well beyond the 3% deficit threshold. Therefore, an Excessive Deficit Procedure was opened for 24 countries out of 27, but Estonia, Luxemburg and UK. Fiscal consolidation measures and economic recovery resulted in a significant improvement of fiscal stance in all countries, in 2019 the average public deficit dropped to 0.9% of GDP and no country under fiscal corrective measure. However, Romania departed from the trend and increased its 2019 budget deficit to 4.64% of GDP, which triggered the opening of the excessive deficit procedure in 2020. This procedure implies a number of measures to reduce the deficit of the general consolidated budget, most likely through a combination of revenue increase and expenditure reduction.





Regarding internal and external **macroeconomic imbalances** at the EU level, monitored through the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure, the European Commission reports published at the end of February, 2020[1] indicates that eight countries are still facing macro imbalances – (Germany, Ireland, Spain, France, Croatia, Netherlands, Portugal and Romania) and three countries have accumulated excessive imbalances – Cyprus, Greece and Italy. In Germany and the Netherlands large current account surpluses persist, Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Croatia have showed a combination of vulnerabilities linked to high private, government and foreign debt. Croatia and Spain slowed down measures to close imbalances, while economic recovery has helped the adjustment in Ireland. In France, government debt is not declining productivity growth remains subdued, while in Sweden, household debt and house prices remain high. In Romania, external imbalances have been growing stimulated by a procyclical and expansionary fiscal policy, while competitiveness has been affected. In Cyprus, financial sector vulnerabilities remain, while in Greece there are still challenges related to government debt, NPLs and the external sector, in a context of still low growth potential and high unemployment. In Italy, government debt to GDP ratio is still on the rise, and potential growth remains insufficient.

While many macroeconomic and fiscal challenges have been pointed out and, in many cases, tackled, the **Green Deal and the digital transformation** are requesting credible policies and significant public and private investments, based on coherent and sustainable economic programs. Strengthening economic framework is a prerequisite and implies the correction of excessive deficits, the correction of macroeconomic imbalances, reduction of vulnerabilities to shocks and coordination of economic policies. There are still areas of improvement, but the current momentum is focused on the recovery phase.

Procyclical fiscal policies in good economic times are the recipe for fiscal pressure and very low investments during recession. Unexpected events – such as the COVID-19 health crisis came in top of other already known risks to global economic growth, such as trade war, migration and political instability.

[1] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, The European Council, The Council, The European Central Bank and The Eurogroup; 2020 European Semester: Assessment of progress on structural reforms, prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances, and results of in-depth reviews under Regulation (EU) No 1176(2011),https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european_semester_communicationcountry_reports_en.pdf

Economic stability is shaken by the health crisis and the subsequent economic lockdown. All member states of the European Union are facing negative growth in 2020, according to the Spring Forecast of the European Commission. Most affected countries are Italy, Greece and Spain, where economic contraction in 2020 is foreseen above 9% of GDP. The less affected country seems to be Poland, where the forecasted economic growth for this year go to only -4.3%, followed by Luxemburg and Austria, Netherlands, Denmark and Romania[1] with a contraction of 5-6 percentage points.

Public finances are the most affected, due to a combined simultaneous and negative effects of lower public revenues and higher expenditures for health sector and social security. As a result, budget deficit of Italy is foreseen at above -11% of GDP in 2020, while for Spain at -10.1% of GDP. The budget deficit of Romania and Poland are also at very high levels of -9.2% of GDP and -9.5% of GDP, respectively. These high deficits are not only adding more pressure on financing the public gap but are also reducing the financial intermediation from banks to private companies. Shrinking economic activity has negative influence on employment, while some current account deficits are reducing in the context of lower consumption (Hungary, Croatia and Romania).

[1] The forecast economic growth for 2020 for Romania is -6% by the EC and -5% by the IMF.

Overview - the spring 2020 forecast

	Real GDP			Inflation			Unemployment rate			Current account			Budget balance		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
Belgium	1.4	-7.2	6.7	1.2	0.2	1.3	5.4	7.0	6.6	-0.7	-0.1	-0.3	-1.9	-8.9	-4.2
Germany	0.6	-6.5	5.9	1.4	0.3	1.4	3.2	4.0	3.5	7.6	6.1	7.4	1.4	-7.0	-1.5
Estonia	4.3	-6.9	5.9	2.3	0.7	1.7	4.4	9.2	6.5	2.3	1.1	2.2	-0.3	-8.3	-3.4
Ireland	5.5	-7.9	6.1	0.9	-0.3	0.9	5.0	7.4	7.0	-9.4	4.6	4.4	0.4	-5.6	-2.9
Greece	1.9	-9.7	7.9	0.5	-0.6	0.5	17.3	19.9	16.8	-0.3	0.1	-1.2	1.5	-6.4	-2.1
Spain	2.0	-9.4	7.0	0.8	0.0	1.0	14.1	18.9	17.0	2.0	3.2	2.7	-2.8	-10.1	-6.7
France	1.3	-8.2	7.4	1.3	0.4	0.9	8.5	10.1	9.7	-0.1	-0.1	-0.4	-3.0	-9.9	-4.0
Italy	0.3	-9.5	6.5	0.6	-0.3	0.7	10.0	11.8	10.7	3.0	3.4	3.3	-1.6	-11.1	-5.6
Cyprus	3.2	-7.4	6.1	0.5	-0.2	1.0	7.1	8.6	7.5	-5.7	-10.9	-10.1	1.7	-7.0	-1.8
Latvia	2.2	-7.0	6.4	2.7	0.2	1.9	6.3	8.6	8.3	0.6	1.1	1.2	-0.2	-7.3	-4.5
Lithuania	3.9	-7.9	7.4	2.2	0.8	1.5	6.3	9.7	7.9	3.5	2.2	2.9	0.3	-6.9	-2.7
Luxembourg	2.3	-5.4	5.7	1.6	0.7	1.6	5.6	6.4	6.1	4.5	4.5	4.5	2.2	-4.8	0.1
Malta	4.4	-5.8	6.0	1.5	0.7	1.1	3.4	5.9	4.4	10.7	7.6	9.7	0.5	-6.7	-2.5
Netherlands	1.8	-6.8	5.0	2.7	0.8	1.3	3.4	5.9	5.3	10.2	9.0	8.4	1.7	-6.3	-3.5
Austria	1.6	-5.5	5.0	1.5	1.1	1.5	4.5	5.8	4.9	2.3	0.9	1.6	0.7	-6.1	-1.9
Portugal	2.2	-6.8	5.8	0.3	-0.2	1.2	6.5	9.7	7.4	0.0	-0.6	-0.2	0.2	-6.5	-1.8
Slovenia	2.4	-7.0	6.7	1.7	0.5	1.2	4.5	7.0	5.1	6.8	6.8	6.8	0.5	-7.2	-2.1
Slovakia	2.3	-6.7	6.6	2.8	1.9	1.1	5.8	8.8	7.1	-2.6	-2.9	-2.4	-1.3	-8.5	-4.2
Finland	1.0	-6.3	3.7	1.1	0.5	1.4	6.7	8.3	7.7	-0.8	-1.3	-1.5	-1.1	-7.4	-3.4
Euro area	**1.2**	**-7.7**	**6.3**	**1.2**	**0.2**	**1.1**	**7.5**	**9.6**	**8.6**	**3.3**	**3.4**	**3.6**	**-0.6**	**-8.5**	**-3.5**
Bulgaria	3.4	-7.2	6.0	2.5	1.1	1.1	4.2	7.0	5.8	5.2	3.3	5.4	2.1	-2.8	-1.8
Czechia	2.6	-6.2	5.0	2.6	2.3	1.9	2.0	5.0	4.2	0.7	-1.5	-1.0	0.3	-6.7	-4.0
Denmark	2.4	-5.9	5.1	0.7	0.3	1.3	5.0	6.4	5.7	7.9	6.2	6.7	3.7	-7.2	-2.3
Croatia	2.9	-9.1	7.5	0.8	0.4	0.9	6.6	10.2	7.4	2.4	-1.7	0.5	0.4	-7.1	-2.2
Hungary	4.9	-7.0	6.0	3.4	3.0	2.7	3.4	7.0	6.1	-0.9	1.3	1.5	-2.0	-5.2	-4.0
Poland	4.1	-4.3	4.1	2.1	2.5	2.8	3.3	7.5	5.3	0.4	0.6	0.9	-0.7	-9.5	-3.8
Romania	4.1	-6.0	4.2	3.9	2.5	3.1	3.9	6.5	5.4	-4.6	-3.3	-3.4	-4.3	-9.2	-11.4
Sweden	1.2	-6.1	4.3	1.7	0.4	1.1	6.8	9.7	9.3	4.4	3.7	4.0	0.5	-5.6	-2.2
EU	**1.5**	**-7.4**	**6.1**	**1.4**	**0.6**	**1.3**	**6.7**	**9.0**	**7.9**	**3.2**	**3.1**	**3.4**	**-0.6**	**-8.3**	**-3.6**
United Kingdom	1.4	-8.3	6.0	1.8	1.2	2.1	3.8	6.7	6.0	-3.8	-4.1	-4.3	-2.1	-10.5	-6.7
China	6.1	1.0	7.8	:	:	:	:	:	:	1.0	0.6	0.8	:	:	:
Japan	0.7	-5.0	2.7	0.5	0.0	0.2	2.3	4.3	4.5	3.5	3.6	3.2	-2.3	-4.9	-5.3
United States	2.3	-6.5	4.9	1.8	0.5	1.5	3.7	9.2	7.6	-2.3	-3.0	-3.0	-7.2	-17.8	-8.5
World	2.9	-3.5	5.2	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

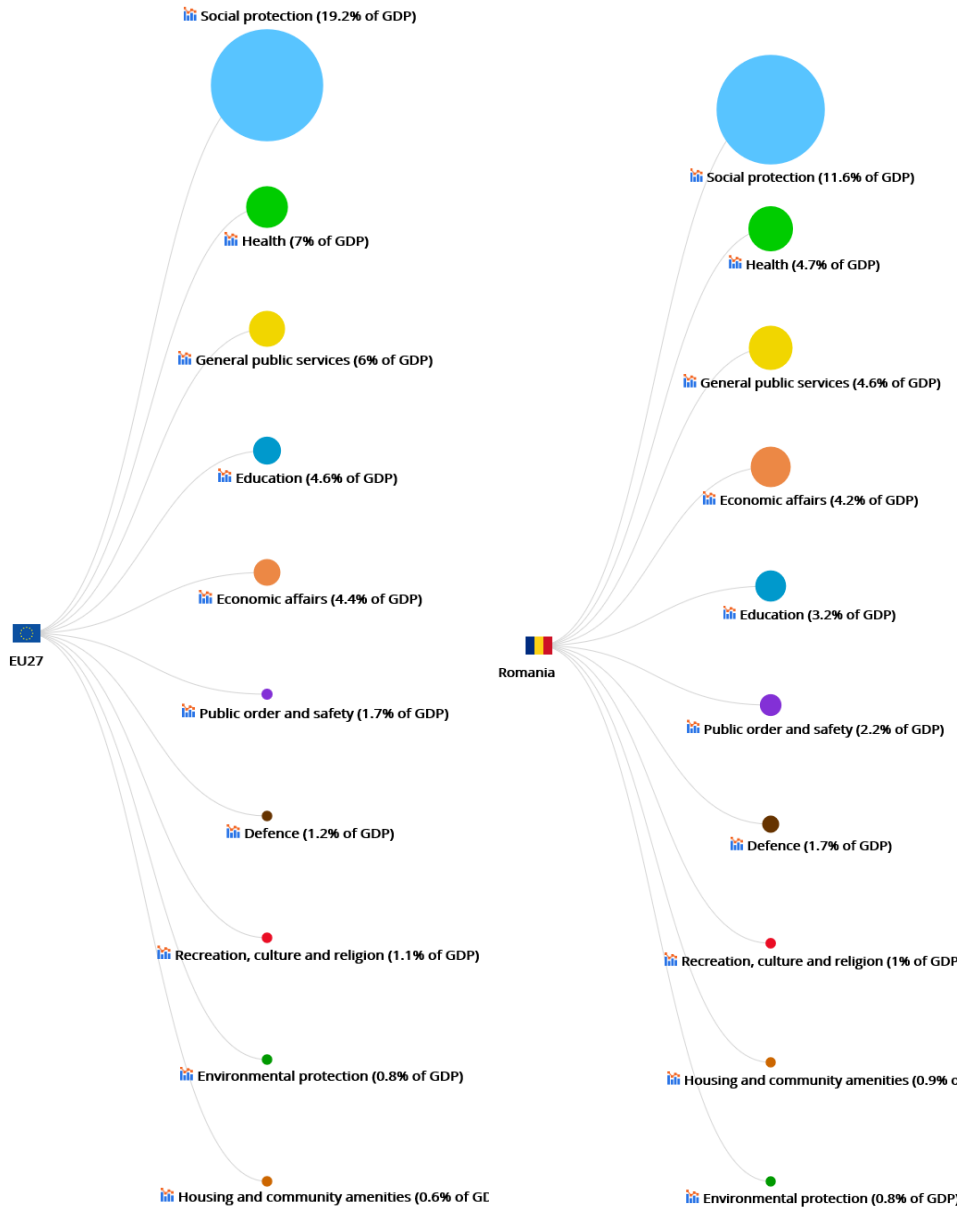
Source: European Commission, Spring Forecast, May 2020

IV. Some are fine tuning while some are closing large gaps

Wise and responsible governments are building now the eco-system of excellence to compensate for higher energy and transport prices reflecting a friendly approach to the environment and a more responsible attitude towards next generations. It requires a certain level and quality of institutions, high standards in health, education and infrastructure, solid social policies and a friendly and predictable business environment. "Old" Europe has accumulated many years of investments and has developed strong institutions. For "New" Europe that has been through brutal shifts of economic and political regimes, the stock of investments and the quality of institutions are weaker.

Persisting weaknesses have been identified in most Central and Eastern Europe in terms of quality of public services. The most severe situation is signaled in Romania, where the lower

level of public revenues is triggering low levels of resources for health, education and social assistance. For example, in 2019, the cost of social assistance was 19.2% of GDP for average EU, while Romania was allocating only 11.6% of GDP, reflecting the huge gap in public revenues – 45% of GDP average EU against 32% of GDP in Romania. With available public resources at two thirds of the EU average, Romania has accumulated significant gaps compared to average and old Europe. Therefore, the health crisis and the new requirements for a greener economy is complicating the economic policy and is adding additional constraints on the convergence process.



Source: Eurostat

V. Next steps

Fixing the economy of the European Union is a priority, which should be based on relocating some production from outside EU. Requirements of greener energy, agriculture, transportation would boost up investments in research and digitalization, contributing to a smart, sustainable and green economy. State aid policies and smart regulations for smart energy production and distribution should be revised immediately for allowing such investments to be implemented in a couple of years. On short term, the new recovery plan designed by the European Commission is ensuring heeling and a quick restart of the EU economy. Good quality education and health remain a prerequisite for this new economic paradigm proposed by the Green Deal and compelled by the pandemic.

At the end of the day, the health crisis is helping Europe to find its sustainable way.

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Strategic Challenges for the Black Sea Region after the Pandemic

Antonia COLIBĂȘANU

National University of Political Studies and Public Administration;

Analyst for Geopolitical Future

Abstract:

The Black Sea Region is a global node of trade and traffic, which makes it useful for forecasting regional stability. While we usually look at the power play in the borderlands to understand the features of the region and indicate the sources for new risks, considering hybrid warfare characteristics, this method becomes obsolete when global events strike. This is why an analysis of the patterns in maritime traffic while also considering those related to security may tell of initial challenges that the region will face post the current pandemic. Such an approach also concludes on potential regional trends, considering the fluid borderline environment.

Key words: *Black Sea region, cargo shipping trade, crisis patterns, COVID-19 geopolitics.*

Theoretical considerations on regional geography

The Black Sea region encompasses the geographic space that has Asia, through the Caucasus, meeting the Middle East and the Balkans, while also intersecting with the winds of Northern Europe, descending into the Black Sea through Ukraine. This area is one of Mackinder's Heartland nodes. In Mackinder's words, if the Heartland is not stable, then the world is unstable. During peaceful times, the Black Sea region is largely a stable area, facilitating exchanges between the large land masses to whom it serves for interconnection. Migration and trade flows keep this region not only stable, but they also help it grow economically and socially, through its infrastructure. At the same time, when the world is troubled, this is a key region, among others, for bringing back peace and stability.

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Time pivots

Starting 2008, the Black Sea region entered into a new historical era. The Russian war in Georgia during the summer of 2008 signaled that Moscow was ready to defend its buffer zones, having ended its own transition from the U.S.S.R. into a more stable, developing power. The economic crisis which was also starting 2008, first hitting the U.S. and then the EU was only later felt in the region, which has benefitted from low integration within the international capital markets.

For those countries in the region that were members of NATO and the EU, the socio-economic problems hitting the West starting 2008 made them realize the vulnerabilities of the systems they were now fully part of. They had to check their dependencies and what each of them meant for their own security and stability. For the rest, those countries that were neither a member of the EU or NATO, the choice between Russia and the West has become more urgent – or has taken the shape of a more aggressive game of influence.

The Ukrainian crisis in 2014 highlights the conflict between Russian and Western influence in the region. The conflict that literally split the country into three - Crimea formally annexed by Russia, Eastern Ukraine de facto separated but not de jure and Ukraine proper - marked, in fact, the first big loss for Russia after its growing as a regional power since 2008. Even if Moscow annexed Crimea and made it part of Russian territory, it lost influence over Kiev. Keeping the entire Ukraine under its influence has been a strategic priority for Russia. No longer being able to do that, Russia must keep Kiev engaged: making sure the conflict in Eastern Ukraine remains frozen is key to that purpose.

In the same time, the tensions in Ukraine and in the Black Sea, triggered responses from the U.S. and its NATO allies. Since 2014, not only did Russia increased its action in its Western Neighborhood, but the U.S. also moved its containment line to the East, by building bilateral partnerships with Poland and Romania while also supporting NATO exercises in the area. All that while also changing focus and taking its internal problems to be the essential strategic questions the U.S. needs to tackle. In 2019, as the U.S. has become a net exporter of hydrocarbons for the first time in history, its pivoting away from the globe to tackle its core, the U.S. has started a new era for itself – and for the world.

Patterns

With the consequences of the 2008 economic crisis spreading during the last decade into the social and political areas of society, nationalism and populism grew all over the world. In essence, while the global environment remained peaceful, it wasn't stable anymore. In 2008, it became clear that globalization was deepening the differences between classes and countries, depending on the level of the value chain these were finding themselves.

The role of the U.S. in the world was challenged by the socio-economic problems the U.S. was facing internally. In the same time, as China was working to remodel their socio-economic system and diminish its dependency on the U.S. markets, the infrastructure projects to Europe, all part of the New Silk Road Strategy were meeting resistance from the very realities of the market it was seeking to enter: the EU was dealing with a period of economic decline itself.

The Russian economy had first experienced a decline and stagnant growth due to the global economic crisis and later it saw the decline and slow growth deepening as a result of the U.S. and European sanctions. Internal resilience was partly supported by the growing nationalism and the idea that Russia had become again powerful, at the global level. In fact, to maintain internal support, Kremlin has been working to keep the U.S. engaged in the Middle East by supporting the Assad regime in the Syrian conflict, which essentially transformed into a regional challenge.

Consequently, the E.U., already troubled by socio-economic effects of the 2008 crisis, had to manage a refugee crisis. In 2015-2016, an increasing number of persons were fleeing the Syrian war in the hope of a better life in Europe, competing with others fleeing other countries of the Middle East or North African conflict zones or simply put, harsh societies.

The refugees and migrants have been choosing among several routes to go to Western Europe, the region that was seen as the best to make a better living for themselves. One of them was the Balkan route, which starts in Turkey. As a country directly involved in the Syrian conflict, considering its strategic interest in the region, which was also directly linked to its internal stability considering the implications for the country's Kurdish minority, Turkey's negotiation power with the EU has grown as the refugee crisis started. More importantly, its regional balancing act between Russia and the U.S. points to its recently announced neo-Ottoman policy, which seeks to re-establish Turkey as a regional power.

This confirms, for the Black Sea region, not only the potential for strategic re-alignment, but also a changing security and socio-economic environment. The NATO ally, which likely needs to

remain the U.S. ally, will, whenever needed, meet Russia's interests. In the same time, the U.S., who is seeking a way out of the Middle East, while remaining engaged on the Eastern Flank, will look to keep costs at a minimum. Considering the Eastern Flank current composition, with troops on the new containment line from the Baltic to the Black Sea, it is not all NATO allies but only some that participate in the new Intermarium – and Turkey is not one of them.

All of the above paint the dilution of the post-Cold War era. Old alliances like NATO and the EU, initially reformed, need to be reinvented, as countries increasingly seek their realistic, national imperatives, out of the globalization framed realities of trade and investment. The stability of the Black Sea area, as that of other areas of the Globe that are naturally nodal, is being challenged.

The pandemic

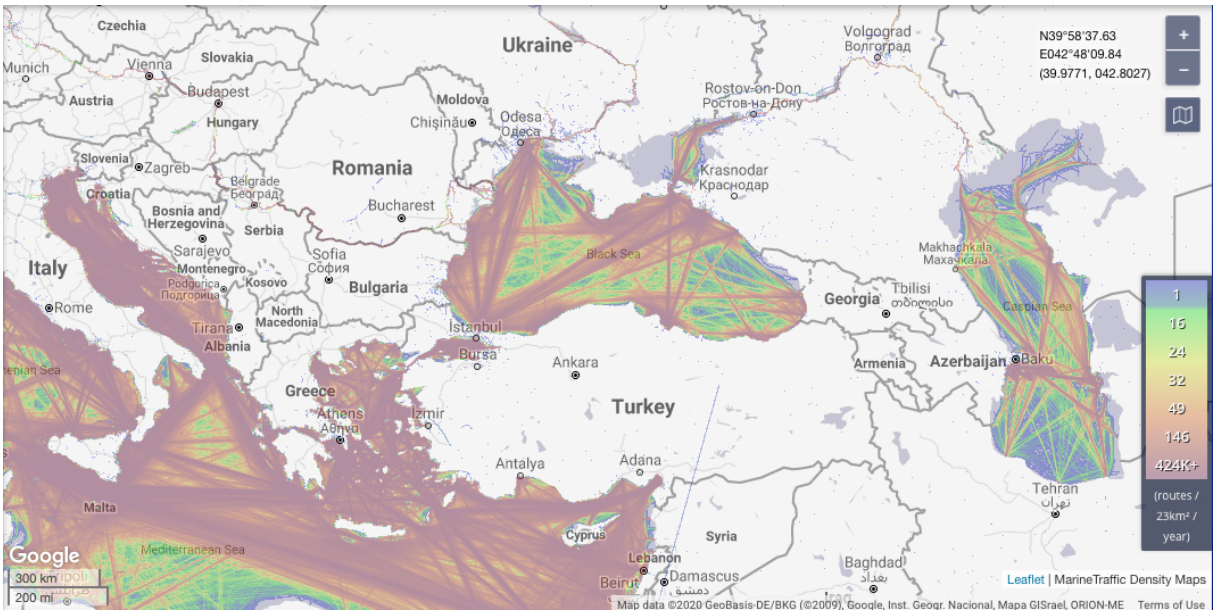
The covid-19 pandemic underlined the need for restructuring, forcing countries all over the world to look inwards and investigate dependencies over other states. The health crisis that hit the Globe has exposed the global supply chain, showing, once more, the vulnerabilities of globalization. In the same time, however, it has also featured the benefits of digitization and the internet, underlining the differences between the urban and the rural, the developed and the underdeveloped. But one way to measure the effects on the Black Sea region, which is naturally a transit node of the world, is to look at how maritime traffic has evolved during the pandemic, considering the regional specific characteristics. This way, it becomes easier to define the region's vulnerabilities dependent on the global trends.

Transportation and shipping have dropped as international trade in goods and tourism has slowed down. While cruises have been halted pretty much everywhere, including in the Black Sea during the first half of 2020, the container shipping has seen an unprecedented decline. According to industry analysts[1], in mid-May, at global level, the idle container fleet stood at around 11% in capacity terms, while containership charter rates were down by around 30% since the beginning of the year.

[1] Jaques B., Crisis to cause unprecedented decline in container traffic: Clarksons, May 29, 2020, https://www.seatrade-maritime.com/containers/crisis-cause-unprecedented-decline-container-traffic-clarksons

In the Black Sea, Istanbul is the major container port, handling 60% of all volumes. Constanta (a 12% share) and Novorossiysk (with 8% share) are the two other main ones, with Poti, Odessa and Varna each making smaller contributions. Novorossiysk, Odessa and Varna are mostly serving local markets, while other ports, like Poti, even if small, have also developed their transit capacity. While Istanbul remains the main transshipment port for the Black Sea region, transshipment volumes are moving between Constanta, Istanbul, with both ports enjoying necessary capabilities to accommodate large vessels coming from Asia and elsewhere. Constanta also acts as the point of entry for transit cargo by barge on the Danube River to the Central European countries.

Figure 1 – Maritime traffic – historical intensity data, all 2017 traffic



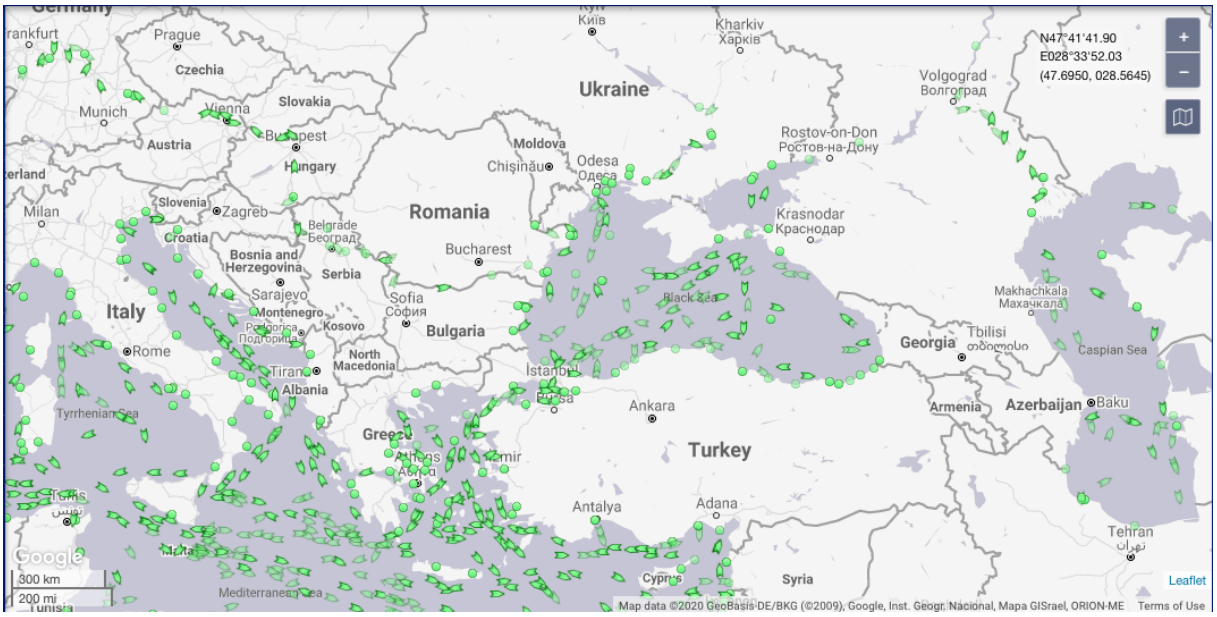
Source: https://www.marinetraffic.com

The idea that transportation in the Black Sea could only grow, also supported by the New Belt and Road Initiative promoted by China, made the case for investment in developing port facilities. Ukraine, Bulgaria and Georgia have undergoing expansion plans of their ports started before 2010 and aiming to increase terminal capabilities so that they could accommodate larger

ships[1]. All these aims, in theory to the growing transshipment business that would make of the Black Sea a maritime hub.

Transshipment is however volatile and highly price sensitive. Port tariffs are dependent on both economic and security risks and therefore there's a lot of interdependence between geopolitics and maritime shipping. A factor that has influenced the container business in the Black Sea has been the war in eastern Ukraine. Odessa was initially badly affected, seeing volumes drop by 26% between 2014 and 2015. However, by 2017 these had recovered to pre-war levels and grew strongly by 15% in 2018, due to the fragile cease fire holding.

Figure 2 – Cargo traffic, June 1, 2020 (mid-season, with June one of the busiest time of the year for shipping)



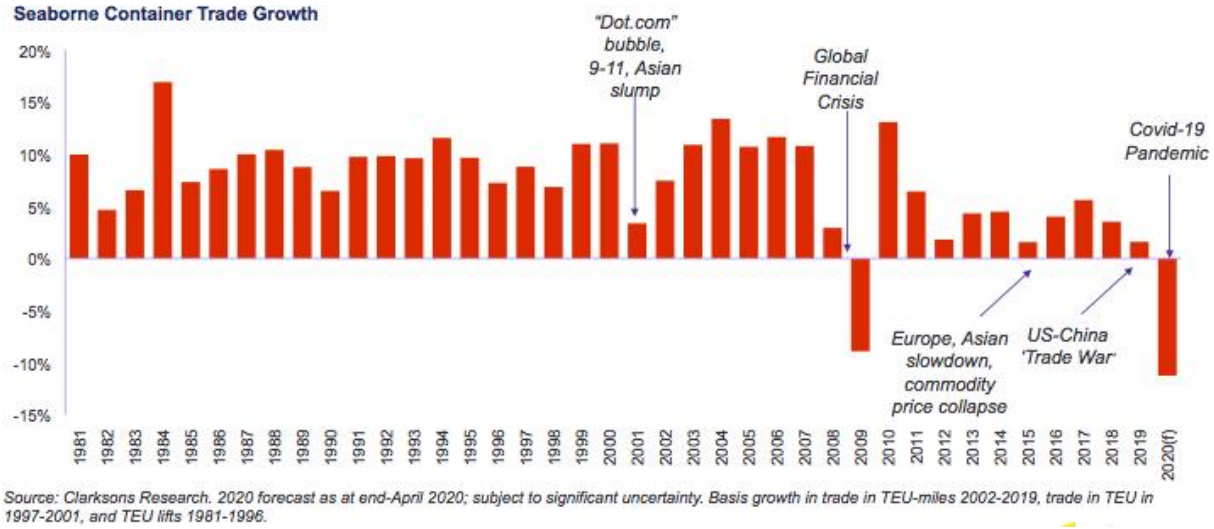
Source: https://www.marinetraffic.com

The global financial crisis of 2008 has caused a slowdown in maritime container trade. However, the overall dynamic did not change significantly, because almost all ports have been focused on their captive market. Recovery from the financial crisis has started, globally, two years later, in 2019, but the seaborne trade growth rate remained modest, considering the ongoing socio-

[1] A presentation of Drewery Maritime Advisors (similar to other industry presentations) shows the case for which the Black Sea ports need to expand their capacity and capabilities to accomodate increased traffic in 2017 - 2020 https://www.espo.be/media/30052013-0830-vanaale.pdf - such increase in traffic never followed, as the economic recovery has been slow worldwide

economic problems of the world's consumer markets: the U.S. and Europe. The U.S. – China trade war and the prospect for a recession, announced in 2019, has anticipated a decrease in shipments worldwide.

Figure 3 – Historical data – maritime cargo 1981 – 2020



Source: Clarksons Research. 2020 forecast as at end-April 2020; subject to significant uncertainty. Basis growth in trade in TEU-miles 2002-2019, trade in TEU in 1997-2001, and TEU lifts 1981-1996.

The sanitary crisis delayed some shipments and halted others. Considering the impact of the pandemic in what regards the maritime cargo shipments is already estimated to outpace the decrease in 2008 and 2009 by about 10%, the most optimist analysts see the industry recovering beginning the last quarter of 2021, while the most pessimistic speak of at least three years before the sector goes back to positive values. In the case of the Black Sea ports and shipping industry, it remains to be seen whether the already traditional feature of being captive to local markets will save it again. At the same time, it is likely that investments having been done to accommodate more traffic will not only stop, but will likely bring losses instead of hoped profits.

In order to understand how traffic will be affected – and define what new patterns will appear in the Black Sea trade flows, understanding dependencies between individual markets and how these will evolve past the sanitary crisis is key. It is visible that traffic is lower than usually, by just looking at the map. But we do not know how national and regional consumption of imports will evolve after the health crisis is over. However, we do know recession will probably hit the world after lockdown policies are no longer in place, even if it is yet early to know the slowdown values, which makes it hard to establish the potential for negative effects that the economic

downturns will have on society. Only when we have that we can measure national and international resilience.

The economic data will allow us better understand how society will evolve, at community and national level. However, considering recent history, as well as the patterns evolving from the time pivots described above, we can conclude on the most important topics to be tackled after the sanitary crisis ends, in the Black Sea area and considering its specific features of connectivity and security. It is likely that maritime traffic in the Black Sea waters will not grow fast – considering the most optimistic global forecasts and the data we have on the region, it is likely that traffic will go to 2017 levels in two years, if Russia and China continues to ship similar quantities to Europe – this will happen if European consumption will get back to levels prior to the pandemic in less than two years. In the same time, stability in what regards economics and politics both needs to remain in place for that to happen.

The post-pandemic questions

The evolution of the global trade flows depends on the economics of the U.S., which is the global biggest consumer and that of the European Union, the market union in the world. Both China and Russia depend on how fast the two consumers will recover from the health crisis. Both have undergoing reforms which aim at restructuring their economy and both Beijing and Moscow have to manage the socio-economic disparities between their regions, while maintaining stability. All four "meet" in the Black Sea area. All have special relations with Turkey, except China who has worked for better relations as recently as 2019 when China's central bank reportedly transferred $1 billion to Turkey as part of a currency swap, giving a short-term boost to the country's dwindling foreign exchange reserves.

With the economic recession coming next the sanitary crisis, Turkey will find itself in trouble again. This has been however anticipated by the current regime in Ankara, who has been touting its neo-ottoman policies in an attempt to gain the public support for Erdogan's expansionist dreams and have the electorate focused on the external opportunities Turkey has and not its internal challenges. Turkey signaled since 2019 that it no longer feels satisfied with its "Western ally" status – it seeks to grow its influence in the Middle East and the Balkans and has been negotiating directly over the migration crisis, reaching out to Germany. The political game Turkey is playing poses new risks and asks for the EU position on trade and security matters both. As Turkey resets

its relationship with the West (the Western Europe and the U.S. both), it is the Balkans and Eastern Europe – the Black Sea region, that will feel the growing tension.

Russia, on the other hand, saw its economy threatened by the low price of oil in the first half of 2020 and doesn't have hope for it to grow much higher even after the lockdown is ended everywhere in the world. The Kremlin first needs to keep the country together, and therefore its first priority is making sure economic policies are implemented for the society to remain stable. Second, it needs to keep the buffer zones – whether it becomes more aggressive or not, depending on how things evolve both in the neighborhood and at home, Belarus and Eastern Ukraine are key for making sure the country's strategic interests are being secured. However, it will have less money to spend abroad and therefore, while some of its influence operations may increase in aggressiveness, others will dilute, depending on where interests lay first. Moscow may choose to spend more money on Ukraine and less on Moldova, for instance.

Russia will correlate its actions to those of the West. The U.S. will remain engaged in Eastern Europe and continue to support the regional cooperation between its allies, Poland and Romania. However, due to its internal problems it is likely to keep costs and involvement to the minimum. While defense capabilities will remain in place and the support for the new Intermarium will continue, it remains to be seen how the U.S. relationship with the Western European countries, not willing to contribute "on equal footing" with Washington to NATO, will change. While this will not affect defense alliances in the Black Sea region, it will likely shape the security arrangements in the region.

Security, unlike defense, refers to social resilience to outside influence and the risk that such influence poses. Depending on how the EU solves its socio-economic problems, and whether or not Brussels increases its political power after the sanitary crisis, countries in the Black Sea region will seek to grow or not their reliance on the EU or become more protective against Brussels. With nationalism growing everywhere in Europe, it is still to be seen how the EU member states will work together, under the EU umbrella. As the multiannual financial framework is being discussed, the EU will either focus on building its core, the eurozone while leaving the existing differences between regions deepen or, on the contrary, support a sustainable approach to diminish such differences.

For Romania and Bulgaria – the Eastern European member states bordering the Black Sea, the challenges after the health crisis ends refers to solving their economic problems while also

limiting influences from Russia and Turkey to affect continental stability. In essence, as the EU gateway to Asia and the Middle East, the two countries will need to manage traffic and trade towards and outside the EU common market. Considering the negotiations over a more political EU, which involves more coordination for managing available funds, which could imply the potential for fiscal cooperation, the need arises for an extended Schengen zone that would include Romania and Bulgaria.

With less maritime cargo in the ports, but increasing risks, considering the economic challenges that China, but also Russia and Turkey face, the EU will likely need to expand its control over borders, if it truly wishes more coordination and building up the "European sovereignty". The trade flows from the Black Sea will never be comparable to those from the Northern Sea or the Atlantic – the Western Europe has now little to fear when it comes to competition, considering the limited and decreasing power China has to invest into building its new Belt and Road Initiative. However, considering the need for securing the critical infrastructure – of which that of the cyber space is key, working to integrate digital economy with digital security may force coordination on the very border of the Black Sea border. In the same time, considering the purpose for establishing new green standards for the economy, it may be worthwhile to consider investing into better management of naval traffic, which currently serves Central Europe through the Danube, starting in Constanta.

All these will likely become topics of negotiations in Brussels. With the plan for "repairing and fixing" the EU for the next generation, the consideration of potential risks for the very existence of the EU remains key. That stands into how much the economy is hit and how much of it is dependent on action being taken of outside players, considering the global supply chain which has grown investments, including into maritime infrastructure. For the Black Sea area, the future of the U.S. and the future of the EU are fundamental. But of them, how the EU evolves will determine the fate of this region. If the EU increases its role through further integration, its bordering and neighboring countries will gravitate around it. Even if frozen conflicts will continue to exist, the security environment will remain relatively stable as the large common European market will continue functioning. If, on the contrary, the EU will dilute, as regional differences will deepen and nationalism will continue growing, the Black Sea region will increasingly become unstable, as the potential for conflicts increases.

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Diminishing Transformative and Normative Role: How the EU Seems to be Losing its Influence in Serbia

Svetlana STEFANOVIĆ

Executive Director, Belgrade Security Forum and Program Coordinator, Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence

Abstract:

The European Union is facing with a number of challenges – rise of populism, lack of leadership, the migrant crisis, Brexit – that shows that the European integration project need to be redesign. The European Union need to consolidate, return to its core values and try overcome the series of crises it's facing. Internal Instability of the Union is reflected on the European Union - Western Balkans processes, that is in a serious slowdown. One of the important attempts of the European Union to integrate countries of the Western Balkans is known as a Berlin Process. Initial enthusiasm that was a driving force for all countries in the Western Balkans region stooped when it became clear that due to the European Union internal unresolved issues, the enlargement of the European Union wouldn't be priority and would be indefinitely delayed. Governments of the Western Balkans countries formally promised to accelerate reforms, resolve bilateral disputes and many of them hoped that would have the opportunity to join the European Union in 2025. For a long time, the European Union – Serbia relation was based on the policy of conditionality, and Serbian authorities were pressured to fulfill their promises – normalize relations with neighbors, promote dealing with the past and, most importantly, deliver indicted for war crimes and genocide - in order to make a move forward. Serbia gained candidate status in 2012, opened negotiations and entered the EU accession process effectively. The enlargement fatigue and fear of the new wave of conditionality policy brings new alternatives on the table for Serbia, but joining the European Union still remain first priority of the Serbian Foreign Policy.

Key words: *European Union, Western Balkans, Serbia, enlargement, alternatives*

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The European Union (EU) is often praised as a "peace project"[1], created in the aftermath of the Second World War. Ever since it was established, there has been no conflict between member states; peace was maintained among members on the basis of economic partnership. Seven decades on, the EU is still seen as one of the most innovative and creative ways to build a community - "the EU isn't perfect, but it is a community that is worth belonging to" [2]. Over the years, the role played by the EU and the nature of its power changed, depending on the situation in each of the member states. Furthermore, it was influenced by the shifting balance of power in the world among the main actors in the international arena. The EU's economic force rarely translated into political and real power.

The European Union: Growing Through Crises

From 1952 to 2008, the European Union was evolving, growing and moving forward all the time. Treaties were negotiated with the goal to create a legal framework around the principle of supranationalism and a strong Union. That meant interdependence for population now exceeding 500 million people. All member states gained from free movement of people, goods, services and capital. More than half of member states share a common currency. EU citizens, can freely live, study and work anywhere in Europe. This is all set on the fundamental rights.

The EU was strongest in the first decade of the 21st century, when its "conditionality policy" was in full force. Following the Summit in Nice, the EU started to face new challenges. Before the summit, all member states had great expectations yet the convening produced ends with minimal results. In 2005, the draft of constitutional treaty that sought to enhance the ownership and identification of citizens with the EU was rejected. The EU showed its strength in economical area, integration of economies and building a common market for member states, but was less successful in fostering integration between European peoples. Having in mind the complexity of the EU, and that the treaties specify how and when the EU can react, one of consequences still remains is that EU has not been successful in proving that it is about more than its institutions.

[1] Simon Garnett: The European Peace Project, Eurozine Editorial, Eurozine's 24/2019 Newsletter, accessed March 1, https://www.eurozine.com/the-european-peace-project/
[2] Emily McDonnell: Four lessons in community building for the European Union, Apolitical, accessed March 1, https://apolitical.co/en/solution_article/lessons-in-community-building-the-european-union

Yet in the 2000s, the eastern enlargement of the EU was a successful project of economic and political expansion. A decade later, three more countries joined; EU enlargement policy was in its heyday, with 10 new members coming from the Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.

We live in the times of uncertainty: changing concepts, rules and norms in the international politics; new actors on international scene, changing balance in the world, changing of perspectives and challenges, etc. Europe is going through a very difficult time and the EU is facing greater hostility from within than ever before. Henry Kissinger in 2018 stated "In the 1940s, the European leaders had a clear sense of direction. Right now, they mostly want to avoid trouble"[1].

Through the years the EU tried but didn't find a proper way to respond to the challenges they faced all the time on daily bases. Firstly, weakness of institutions and policies, treaties aspiration wasn't set on proper way to the politics of crisis management. Secondly, citizens of EU lost trust in their institutions, and they are worried for their own security. Thirdly, there is an apparent lack of leadership, confounded by populists and now, sovereigntists. Financial crisis starting in 2008 led to a redefinition of EU's goals. Over the decade EU was prioritizing economic performance over social justice. Within the context of the crisis, the EU values of equality and solidarity have also been challenged by the rise of the nationalist right and the growth of xenophobia all over Europe. This has proven as a real threat because it undermines some of the main principles of the common European project.

Within the EU itself we have witnessed a "grand return" of history, geopolitics, identity issues.[2] On one side, we have in some member states an autocratic tendency (e.g. Hungary) emerging, than the separation of powers (Poland) is disturbed, and the solidarity for which the EU was known has been brought into question (with the unwillingness to accept the "quota system" as part of the EU's migration policy). Another trend has been observed also, one of "nationalization" of enlargement policy, now used by members as a trump card in their foreign policy contests (an example is the French "no" to the aspirations of North Macedonia and Albania). Finally, there is Brexit.

The migrant crisis has been a profound test of the EU system and Union of member states, sown doubts and debates over sovereignty and the right of member states to define their own

[1] Edward Luce: Henry Kissinger: 'We are in a very, very grave period", Financial Times, Article, accessed March 1, https://www.ft.com/content/926a66b0-8b49-11e8-bf9e-8771d5404543

[2] Walter Russel Mead: The Return of Geopolitics – The Revenge of Revisionist Powers, Foreign Affairs, article, accessed March 1, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2014-04-17/return-geopolitics

domestic policies that do not necessarily reflect ones set in Brussels. The EU can't speak with one voice on foreign policy and defense issues. Its institutions and decision-making procedures baffle the public and permanently seem in need of reform.

If we look the broader picture, we will see that the future of Europe is linked to the future of the European Union. We are living in a complex and multi-connected world, and the European model and norms are increasingly challenged by the competition of great powers in our wider neighborhood, as well as the erosion of solidarity within the EU. The EU is depending on relations between France and Germany, but also on relations with other international actors like USA, China and Russia. A passive response to these challenges would inhibit the EU's ability to maintain its basic values within its own space and act as model for a security community in the world.

It seemed that for the EU, after ten years of crisis, a period of consolidation had begun; results of the European Parliament elections in 2019 were one indicator that the growth of populism has reached its limits, having in mind the pro-European parties results. But on the other hand, divisions remain. EU is in dire need of the reform of institutions, to gain back trust among citizens; for this, there seems to be no partner among member states. Skepticism is growing yet expectations remain high. There is no political figure that is recognized and connected with the EU as actor of international relations. Also, there is problem with the leading structure in the Union. Weak leadership doesn't bring the promise of change.

From a long-term perspective, there is no doubt that the EU has been a success. Yet historical achievements do not necessarily ensure success in the near future. On the beginning of 2020, we can see that the EU is still a half-built building. The new institutions are needed, proactive leadership, and a change to its enlargement policy. The answer to all these challenges – of credibility, integrity – of the EU we propose is "more Europe"[1].

The European Union and the Western Balkans

The EU enlargement policy was a major success of the EU for years. The success story of the transformation of Central and Eastern European neighbors after 1989 was brought about by

[1] Opening Statement in the European Parliament Plenary Session by Ursula von der Leyen, Candidate for President of the European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_19_4230

transformative power during their transition period and it was well known as a process of Europeanisation[1].

Following the economic and financial crisis, Brexit and other problems and issues that the EU is facing, enlargement is seen as a problem rather than a solution with future enlargement of the EU to the WB now questioned. On the other hand, the Western Balkans region is small area, very diverse, still in the process of transformation, dealing with bilateral issues, seeing no alternative to the "European path".

In the scope of the enlargement policy, the EU created the Western Balkans as a "political construct" – bringing together a group of countries – Albania, Croatia, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo. After Croatia joined the European Union in 2013, the six remaining countries – also referred as the "Western Balkans Six"[2] (WB6) – four are candidate countries to enter the EU (Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and North Macedonia) while two (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo) are potential candidates.

Cooperation between the Western Balkans countries in practice exists only in the form of regional forums and initiatives. While some of them are active and producing results, purpose or achievements of many remains unclear. The Berlin Process, launched in 2014 and imagined by the Germans as a way to offer some kind of integration to WB6 while aiding the integration of these countries into the EU, has the highest profile of them all. The Process is supported by the European Commission, international financial institutions and the Member States involved – Austria, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia and the United Kingdom. The Process's connectivity agenda refers to linking the people (social dimension), economies (economic dimension) and states (political dimension) of the region. Within this agenda, the Process has thus far yielded initiatives and projects in the fields of transport and infrastructure, economic connectivity, youth cooperation and cooperation among businesses and among the civil societies of the Western Balkans. Aiming for institutionalization, it also inspired setting up entities-regional organizations: the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO), the Western Balkans Chambers Investment Forum (WBCIF), the Western Balkans Fund (WBF), South East Europe Transport Community. The Berlin Process encompasses the meetings of the representatives of regional civil society organizations (Civil

[1] Jean Walk: EU Enlargement: from successful policy to dead end?, Eurac Research Blog, accessed March 1, https://blogs.eurac.edu/eureka/eu-enlargement-from-successful-policy-to-dead-end/
[2] More on https://berlinprocess.info/

Society Forum of the Western Balkan Summit Series), youth organizations (Youth Forum) and business associations (Business Forum).

During the Sofia Summit of the European Council in May 2018 and following the Sofia Declaration, European leaders reaffirmed their support towards the admission of the Western Balkans countries as EU members. But enlargement remains conditioned on successful resolution of numerous open issues. Observing the socio-economic and political development, the convergence of the Western Balkans with the EU is at the heart of the accession process. And in almost all countries in the WB region, during the accession process the EU was directly involved in reforms in what was without precedence in modern history. In the aftermath of 1990s, all countries in the region were looking in the same direction, to "strive for Europe" and saw the EU as their final destination.

The Western Balkans countries and politics are rightly dominated by the perspective of the EU enlargement, but given the delays in this process the countries of this region should be focused on enhancing their institutional capacities, regional cooperation, and democratic state-building.

The Western Balkans (WB) remains the last part of Europe that is not yet integrated, while on the other side enlargement has become the driving force of political change and hope for all citizens in the WB region. EU has lost its power of attraction; at the same moment its enlargement ambitions have deflated.

All WB states had went through or are going through one iteration of policy of conditionality: Albania… justice reform… North Macedonia and Montenegro… rule of law issues… more researchers are calling upon the EU to exert more pressure on Serbia's government.[1] Six years on, it is clear that opening of negotiations and roughly half of the chapters opened did not bring the country closer to the EU. Stabilocracy, term popularized by Srdja Pavlovic and Florian Bieber, has emerged causing a change of perspective and new approaches to each country. While political representatives repeat how the "European perspective" is not closed, but fatigue in the WB countries is there and mistrust to the process is stronger than ever. During all this time, and after frequent crises (economic, migrant, war in Ukraine), the prestige of the EU diminished – citizens were no longer sure that it was this "bright future" that awaited us all from WB region.

[1] Beáta Huszka: The power of perspective: Why EU membership still matters in the Western Balkans, Policy Brief, European Council on Foreign Relations, accessed March 1, https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/the_power_of_perspective_why_eu_membership_still_matters_in_western_balkans

More Europe cannot be realized without the inclusion of the Balkans in its ranks through a responsible and predictable enlargement policy. But both sides need to change approach, because it seems this one doesn't work.

If WB countries want to survive ongoing crises in the EU, as well as in their own neighborhood, to become stronger and dedicated to the process, political elites in the region together with civil society need to find a common approach and then become part of the European solutions. All WB countries with their governments need to work on and solve bilateral disputes in a constructive way instead of undermining each other's efforts. The Berlin process is more than welcome contribution to the long-term development of the region. It needs to be materialized through short-term and concrete efforts by the EU and the WB countries that will provide visible results that enhance lives of citizens. Also, WB countries need to prepare to extend the solidarity demonstrated toward refugees and migrants to a long-term commitment to respect human rights of everyone regardless of where they are coming from, including their most vulnerable citizens. And more responsible engagement by WB countries within the region will help to the WB countries to get closer and faster become part of European comprehensive response.

On the other side, the EU has to behave as though the future of the Western Balkans actually matters for them and that they really want to "open the doors" to the WB countries. The example of North Macedonia is telling… The fact is that the countries of the Western Balkans are surrounded by EU member states on all sides and they are in their suburb. Therefore, everything that happen and taking place in any country of the region impact all countries of the region, and happenings in the non-member countries which undermine the very standards that the EU claims to represent cannot be ignored by EU. One of the most important roles of the EU must be to encourage aspirations for membership by assisting countries to understand why and how the union's values will improve the standard of living both for each country and for the union as a whole.

If something doesn't change in the next period, the "European project"[1] can be easily turn in something very different for WB countries. If credibility of EU is not restored, if there is no good news for all those waiting for a sign of optimism, in the sense that at least some progress has

[1]Thierry Chopin and Jean-François Jamet: The Future of the European Project, Fondation Robert Schuman, European Issue no 393, accessed March 1, https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/european-issues/0393-the-future-of-the-european-project

been made, WB countries will look for new alternatives. Seeking new investments and new chances for growth and development, they will be tempted to find new actors that will serve as their backup plan. It can easily happen that WB countries "slip" out of the EU's sphere of influence.

This process which kept societies and politicians in the region motivated to pursue democratic and economic reforms, rule of law and the fight against corruption for decades, however seems to be slowing down for the last year. But the good thing is that again WB is in the spotlight and hence the new methodology that could offer some new approaches to the countries waiting for their turn. Also, finally somebody in the Brussels heard WB grieved that they are unhappy with the EU approach and individual members turning a blind eye to stability and state capture. If nothing else, it can be ignored anymore.

European Union and the Republic of Serbia

When it comes to Serbia-EU relations we see how in 20 years they have gone almost whole circle. From believing that EU is the only direction for Serbian society to giving up and trying to find new alternatives. This recent history of relations can be divided in three different phases: first, expectation based on the policy of trust that we are on the European path, roughly from late 2000 to 2006, second, policy of conditionality and mistrust or enlargement fatigue: from 2006 to 2014 and third, seeking new alternatives: from 2014 – ongoing.

Policy of Trust: 2000 – 2006

Following the deposing of Milosevic regime in October 2000, political and economic transition started and the highest priority was given to the European integration process. The new era in relations between EU and Serbia, at that time still Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, started immediately after the political changes. Financial support was significant: FR Yugoslavia was assisted with 200 million euros for consolidation after democratic changes and this was a good sign for the new Government to begin the process of Serbia's joining the European Union. Even though Serbia had pro-European foreign policy orientation in that moment it was not enough to begin the walk on the European path. EU decided that Western Balkans will become part of the EU as a whole region. It was necessary that all countries carry out fundamental reforms, set

democratic rules, with the main focus on the rule of law and respect of the human rights, develop modern market economy and improve regional cooperation.

From the beginning, Serbian political elites were dedicated and committed to integration of Serbia to EU, set that as a high priority and adopted in Parliament "Resolution on the EU Accession" in 2004. The Government was ready to meet all political conditions for joining the EU. Serbia got the green light to start negotiations with the European Union in 2005, after adoption of the Feasibility Report and started the negotiations on the Stabilization and Association agreement. It was a positive impulse and good sign which was a driving force and promotion of the EU in Serbia was on a highest level. Image of EU in Serbia was good and expectations were very high. Public opinion polls show that people were in favor of the EU and expected to be part of the Union very soon.

In this period, almost all reports issues by European Commission detected a number of serious problems in the process of political and economic transition as well as in implementing of the European standards, but the main focus was on a negative assessment of Serbia's cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Failure of Serbia's authorities to arrest remaining fugitives led to call of negotiations on SAA in 2006. Also, in the same year the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro fell apart and Serbia continued European integration process as an independent state.

Policy of conditionality and mistrust: 2006 – 2014

Serbia expected more from the EU and its relations, trust in the European integration process was high, as well as expectations. The new Serbian Government in 2007 made the commitment that it will fully cooperate with ICTY and the SAA negotiations were completed. But new challenges as well as other hidden factors had arisen. The policy of conditioning and expecting from Serbia only to deliver, as well as disagreement on the status of Kosovo and recognition of Kosovo's independence by majority of the EU member states in 2008 resulted in the growing Euroscepticism in Serbia but also contributed to strong polarization among the political elites in Belgrade.

In 2008, policy of conditionality reached its symbolic peak, reinforcing anti-European sentiments among citizens of Serbia that also effected the stability of the coalition government. Political crisis in Serbia led to snap elections and EU support among pro-European forces even

though a lot of questions were opened. But on the other hand, in 2009 visa-free regime entered into force for travelling to Schengen countries and Serbia applied for EU membership, which made the EU's popularity among citizens rising. Political elites made the promise that Serbia will join the EU eventually. They also used fact that EU will bring money and new financial impetus to Serbia.

A decade later, citizens don't believe that we will be part of the EU and public opinion polls show that support to the EU is rapidly decreasing and has been hovering since 2012 a little above 50% of those who want Serbia to be part of the EU. This was also a reflection of the crises that started in 2008, and which show that EU is not as strong as it once was. And with migrant crises some of the core values are on the test.

On the other hand, European integration path and Serbia's EU membership is proclaimed as the first strategic foreign policy priority of the Republic of Serbia. In 2012 Serbia obtained candidate country status and in 2014 started the negotiation process after the first intergovernmental conference was held.

Image of the EU was typically connected with the all conditions that Republic of Serbia was obliged to fulfill and never with a support of the EU and foreign direct investments coming from EU members. In the period from 2007 to 2016 EU Member States donations have reached €523.86 million.[1] The Delegation of the EU to Serbia failed in communication that didn't show what actually had been done in different areas, especially investment in the infrastructural project and help to smaller cities and local communities. Success stories were rarely told.

Seeking alternatives: 2014 – on

Serbia's accession to the EU is a complex and comprehensive process. But in the last six years it seems that there is no European integration process and no enthusiasm among those who are in charge with Serbia's negotiating process. In the last year only 2 chapters were open and Government hasn't appointed the chief of the negotiation team. It seems that the EU still uses the politics of the "stick and carrot", but new methodology is a chance to consolidate and check where we stand in this moment and how to continue reforms. The last EU progress report shows that democracy in Serbia is on the test, with no media freedoms and that there is no progress at all.

[1] EU Assistance to Serbia, accessed April 10 http://europa.rs/eu-assistance-to-serbia/?lang=en

Very important is that EU moderated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, after Mogherini left the position of High Representative of the Union is almost invisible.

On the other hand, political elites in Serbia try to play neutral game and to promise cooperation to everyone, and the last two years served to show that Serbia actually has an alternative to European path, that our traditional friends are Russia and China and that they will help Serbia.

The EU is still one of the biggest donors to Serbia with more than €3.6 billion[1] in grants provided over the past 18 years in all fields and server to prepare and effectively implement obligations.

This and next year can easily become a turning point for the European project in Serbia, and the Western Balkans. If the EU does not restore its credibility, if there are no good news of progress on the European path for the countries in the region, if there is no feel of making some progress and if there are no new financial arrangements alternatives will win.

China is ready to offer new possibilities in terms of investing in infrastructure and taking over strategic sectors of the economy. Serbia is at a risk of slipping out from Brussels' zone of influence.

Conclusion

It's a fact that we all live in the age of uncertainty in the international arena and there is no good prediction what will happen in the next period, because the situation is changed on the daily level. Crises are all over us. In the next period, Serbia need to choose the side and to dedicate to process if the membership in the EU is still the one of the priorities of the foreign policy. Commitment to fulfillment of the obligations accepted is a priority. Western Balkans region faces number of difficulties when it comes to the EU integration process and internal political dynamics seem to make situation even more difficult. Continuity of working on solving of its own bilateral disputes is on the top of the agenda.

EU is on the crossroads and with a lot of open questions – how EU might transform after Brexit, what will be the EU's position on the global stage and the power of European system of values and it's all connected with EU's enlargement policy and its relations with the Western Balkans. In this regard, the future of Europe lies in the new leadership, responsible, dedicated and brave, ready to deliver on the issues that really matter to people. And, "unless it acts soon, Europe

[1] EU Assistance to Serbia, accessed April 10 http://europa.rs/eu-assistance-to-serbia/?lang=en

may become not a player in the new world order but the chessboard on which great powers compete for power and glory."[1]

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Intersectional Exclusion of Roma Women in the Area of Economic Empowerment in Romania

Claudia Cerasela BĂNICĂ

Human Rights and Advocacy Centre

Abstract:

The paper focuses on the exclusion of Roma women from the economic development market in Romania which is explained through the interaction of the intersectional discrimination with other constraints which jointly deepens the situation. Thus, the analysis is centered on the main identities of Roma women, gender and race, throughout several levels from individual to state level and presents the changing position among these core identities in different contexts. The paper completes this analysis with several recommendations to tackle the identified constraints in Roma women road to economic empowerment.

Key words: *Roma women, intersectionality, labour market, discrimination, multiple exclusion.*

Introduction

The economic justice of Roma women remains an unsolved matter and a challenge due its multifaced dimensions, such as gender, ethnicity, economic and social status, compounded by an intergenerational exclusion, which jointly have created layers of inequality and disempowerment of Roma women giving way to further marginalization, poverty, oppression and denial of a better quality of life.

In Romania, this situation is mirrored by several statistical data which show that after three decades of state interventions in this area, merely 23% of Roma women aged 24-60 years in Romania are in paid work versus 64% Roma men and 77% are missing from education, work or

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training[1]. This status quo has led generally to high poverty of the Roma households, as more than 70% live in deep poverty[2], affecting particularly women, by having poor access to health care (47% of Roma women do not have medical insurance in comparison with 22% of non-Roma women aged 16 and above[3]) and inadequate housing (84% continue to live in poor housing conditions[4]).

1. Concept of intersectional discrimination

In the 90's Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced "intersectionality" as a concept to analyze the power relation between white and black women in USA[5], and overtime it gained more attention within the international and political discourse, as it became the main tool to advocate for gender equality in feminism movements.

A Report of the UN Expert Group on "Gender and racial discrimination" in 2001, explained that "The idea of intersectionality seeks to capture both the structural and dynamic consequences of the interaction between two or more forms of discrimination or systems of subordination. It specifically addresses the manner in which racism, patriarchy, economic disadvantages and other discriminatory systems contribute to create layers of inequality that structures the relative positions of women and men, races and other groups. Moreover, it addresses the way that specific acts and policies create burdens that flow along these intersecting axes contributing actively to create a dynamic of disempowerment"[6].

2. The narrative of intersectionality within economic participation of Roma women

The intersectional and pervasive discrimination of Roma women in the economic empowerment area, generates overlapping oppression as it occurs within the general construction

[1] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, "Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey | Roma 2018, page 20, accessed June, 14, 2020, https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2016-eu-minorities-survey-roma-selected-findings_en.pdf.

[2] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, "Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey | Roma 2018, page 14.

[3] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, "Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey | Roma 2018, page 28.

[4] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, "Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey | Roma 2018, page 31.

[5] Crenshaw, Kimberlé, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity, Politics, and Violence against Women of Color", 1991, *Stanford Law Review*, 43 (6), pp.1241-1299.1989.

[6] Presentation of the Expert Group on gender and racial discrimination, organised by the UN Division for the Advancement of Women in collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN Development Fund for Women in November 2000 in Zagreb, Croatia.

of gender inequality and feminization of non-Roma women epitomized through lower employment than men[1], occupational segregation in so called "traditional jobs" for women in the educational, health and social services areas which are lower paid[2], gender pay gap[3] or lower rate in management positions, etc. Whereas for non-Roma women the employment inequalities are more related to the barriers to progression up the career ladder, diversified occupational opportunities, equal payment and recognition of the expertise, for Roma women inequalities are mainly related to their entry and retainment in the labour market in "dead-end" jobs which do not offer a career path.

This discrepancy is more a problem of under-inclusion from a gender discrimination perspective[4] into the systemic intergenerational racial discrimination narratives of Roma which during five centuries built up the unbalanced power relationship between non-Roma and Roma, leading to a robust vicious circle of marginalization of Roma and inequality in the economic area. Thus, within this discrimination framework, the status quo of Roma women on the economic market naturally is more vulnerable versus Roma men and non-Roma women.

Due to the interconnected and circumventable relationship between determinants of the poverty and exclusion of Roma, the lack of employment of Roma generates low participation of their children in education, poor access to health care and proper housing for the entire family, whereas lack of education connected with poor health care and housing lead to low participation in the employment market. Within this vicious circle of marginalization and discrimination, Roma women are disproportionately more vulnerable as the following data shows; even if 83% of Roma girls are enrolled in the compulsory education, towards the end of the lower secondary education 79% leave the school, less than 4% succeed to get enrolled in upper secondary education, and only 3% of Roma are actually participating in academic education[5].

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[1] National Institute of Statistics, "Women and Men, Working and Life Partnership ", 2017, page 11, accessed June 14, 2020. According to the NIS, in 2017, the women employment rate was lower (55.8%) than men (71.8%).

[2] National Institute of Statistics, page 9.

[3] Eurofound- European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, "The gender employment gap: Challenges and solutions", *Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg*, 2016, page 17, accessed June 14, 2020, https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2016/labour-market/the-gender-employment-gap-challenges-and-solutions. The study shows that the gap of earnings and pay is of 10% between women and men in Romania.

[4] Patel, Pragana, "Notes on Gender and Racial Discrimination: An urgent need to integrate an intersectional perspective to the examination and development of policies, strategies and remedies for gender and racial equality", accessed June 15, 2020, https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/Patel45.htm.

[5] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, "Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey | Roma 2014, pages 24-27, accessed June 14, 2020, https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2016-eu-minorities-survey-roma-selected-findings_en.pdf.

Several structural factors in Roma women's exclusion from employment are constructed at individual, community, labour market and state level which built up layers of inequality and disempowerment.

At individual and community level, commonly, Roma women have limited decision making due to unbalanced power between Roma women and men as a result of the patriarchal system[1] and of the financial power of men who are generally the main breadwinner. This situation is more severe in rural areas or traditional communities, where due to the gender conservative norms, early marriages and pregnancies are another determinant in preventing women from completing their education and entering the labour force. In this situation the gender discrimination overshoots the racial discrimination, by intensifying the individual vulnerabilities and inequalities of the Roma women within their families and communities, abating their self-esteem and, thus, their participation in the community and socio-economic life.

The solution is the empowerment of women to gain the power to reclaim their rights and of their children, to make their own decision, to balance the household power and get out of the harmful traditional gender norms through a comprehensive intervention which must contain measures to tackle inclusive the gender-ethnic discrimination. The empowerment of Roma women will trigger a positive ripple impact, which will lead to changes not only with their families but across their community and mainstream society.

At the level of labour market, several constraints impede the access of Roma women, such as lack or low qualifications, concentration of jobs in urban areas, lack of infrastructure such public transportation between the residence and the workplace, lack of childcare support measures or no flexible working time in case of mothers.

These constraints are affecting similarly non-Roma women with the only exception that in case of Roma women is an additional constraint, racial discrimination, which diminishes radically the probabilities to obtain a job if they are in competition with non-Roma women job seekers who possess similar or lower profile for so-called traditional women jobs. In case of other type of jobs, both Roma and non-Roma women are more likely to not be successful due to gender identity, the only difference being that Roma women would be the last choice. These scenarios are an

[1] Oprea, Alexandra, "Re-envisioning Social Justice from the Ground Up: Including the Experiences of Romani Women", *Essex Human Rights Review Vol. 1 No. 1*, page 2.

illustration of the power relationships between different groups and the impact of the deep-rooted stereotypes and prejudices.

The layers of exclusion of Roma women will grow as much as further identities such as disability, citizenship, sexual orientation, or other constraints would be added to their core identity: ethnicity and gender. There is possibility that other identities to dominate this core, depending on the hierarchical level of discrimination within the labour market or society. In Romania, the most discriminated group is represented by LGBT persons, thus, there is more likely that this group would be experiencing more discrimination and exclusion from job market than Roma women.

Tackling discrimination based on ethnicity is essential for securing effective entry of Roma women in the labour market by creating a practice of improving and adapting the national anti-discrimination legislation to European standards and efficiently enforce them and by increasing the level of awareness of Roma women about the legislation and mechanisms to combat discrimination and improve their reporting conduct as only 23% of Roma women aged 16 and above versus 34% Roma men have information about legislation against discrimination law in applying for a job[1].

At the state level, in spite of the thorough-going pro-discourse in the recent times on the necessity to reform European and national policies and legislations in order to incorporate measures to answer the intersectionality discrimination, states continue to use the approach of single axes discrimination and resist to enact integrated equality laws, establish single equality bodies for multiple discrimination, develop an integrated implementation, monitoring and evaluation system of the public policies from local to national level and collect disaggregated data by race gender and other identities.

Likewise, a quick review of the existing national policies on Roma social inclusion in Romania shows that there are solely focused on responding to the inequalities and exclusion as result of race identity, while gender is bonded as vertically approach than intersectional, steering to increase the gap of inequalities and discrimination of women minority within Roma minority. Thus, the proposal of post 2020 National Strategy on Roma Inclusion includes mainstreamed actions for Roma communities and overlooks the measures targeting Roma women, who are

[1] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, "Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey | Roma 2016, page 37.

becoming invisible within the framework [1]. In accordance with the intersectionality principle, the inequalities of Roma women must be part as well of the public discourse on gender equality, disability, youth, etc.

Contrary, the civil society already confirmed that the way ahead in order to tackle successfully and efficiently the complex and interconnected constraints regarding Romani women economic participation is not through a sole area intervention but through a multi-tier approach in several areas such as economic empowerment tied up with education, health care, women empowerment in public life, targeting not only women but as well as men and the decision-makers.

Further, to be sustainable and effective, the integration interventions should be up-scaled from grassroots to policy level, be on a long-term basis, flexible and multi-sectorial with concurrent entry points of economic empowerment and education supported by additional services in areas which are generating specific constraints such as access to family planning, childcare support measures, etc.

3. Conclusion

Currently, the gender and ethnicity are addressed separately by the policymakers and state enforcement actors in the area of economic empowerment, erasing the Roma women from the gender equality and Roma inclusion policies and state interventions. Therefore, for an effective tackling of exclusion of Roma women in this arena, the recognition of the intersectionality discrimination is essential, otherwise Roma women will continue to experience oppression and marginalization within their communities and the society at-large, costing Romanian economy averagely 2 million Euros per year per person.

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[1] National Agency for Roma, "Recommendation of the public policy in the area of social inclusion of members of Roma community from Romania for the period 2021-20217", February 2020, available at http://www.anr.gov.ro/images/Site2020/Documente/ANR---Text-prezentare-noua-viziune-a-viitoarei-SNIR-2021-2027---19.02.2020-FINAL-pentru-website.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3CIlLRTKYC9ee1g1Hvf-EHefldv2av0-YEJA9RYZmgJD7eLusUrvQgOfA.

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The Impact of Regional and International Evolutions on the Moldova's Europeanization Path

Ludmila NOFIT

Program coordinator, Foreign Policy Association of Moldova

Abstract:

The nowadays world has never reached such a level of uncertainty and insecurity as in the last decades when the political, economic and security developments at all levels shifted the balance of power in the Euro-Atlantic space and beyond. It's obvious that had a major impact on further countries' development and the Republic of Moldova is not an exception in this regard. This paper is analyzing the external context along with the main factors such as: the annexation of Crimea, the ongoing military confrontation on the Eastern territory of Ukraine, Russian influence in the region, the Trump's administration policy and the changing role of the USA on the international arena, the institutional crisis within the EU including the impact of the recent pandemic challenge etc. In result, that led to a new transformative world order and the effect on the less developed countries such as Moldova. Also, I identified a number of triggers that created premises to undermine the irreversibility of the Europeanization development of the country, such as: lost momentum concerning Moldova's progress on the economic and political association with the EU, a pro-Russian Moldovan elected president and a failed balanced foreign policy approach, lack of substantial reforms in accordance with the EU-Moldova Association Agreement, promoting the narrow interests of a small group close to Moldovan leadership etc. Instead of conclusion, I am highlighting possible developments of the current Moldovan political situation, emphasizing the importance of the upcoming presidential elections planned for the 1st November 2020. In particular, the parliamentary opposition role in an eventual change of the Moldovan political landscape aimed to maintain and advance on the country's Europeanization and modernization path of development.

Key words: *democracy, Europeanization, crisis, challenges, elections, new order*

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The new (dis)order establishment

The international arena is dominated by the increased geopolitical tension between the United States of America, China and Russia, on the one hand, and the internal political challenges occurred within the European Union and NATO, on the other hand. Thus, have determined important political actors to re-view own policies accordingly to their national interests, at the same time, shattering the liberal world order.

The present world took a different starting turn with the Crimea annexation by Russia in 2014, followed by the on-going war in Eastern Ukraine. A strong message of Russia reasserting itself as a global power led to a further political confrontation with Western allies. As a result, there is a new force transforming the international relations system. In addition, the EU and US's economic sanctions imposed on Russia at first sight, gave a leverage to undermine the Russian influence in the region. The immediate consequences were Russian increasing economic burden and a political isolation at the foremost high-level forums. Although, those punishment mechanisms towards Russia had failed when European leaders have reset their cooperation with Kremlin by defending own national interests. The statement of the Hungarian Prime-minister is a confirmation of that: "If the Russian gas comes only through Ukraine, that is not good for Hungary. We do not like to depend on any one transit country."[1]

On the other hand, the international community is used to a US that is always taking the lead whenever major issues are emerging in terms of security, economy and finance, endorsing good governance and democracy, being a sound global power wherever in the world. Throughout the Trump administration, the US's role changed by giving a clear message to its traditional allies that it's time to put "America First", affirming that the future belongs to "patriots" over "globalists"[2]. The Trump's political approach lead to a number of unprecedented decisions: the US' withdrawal from the Iran Nuclear Agreement, from the important UN specialized institutions like UNESCO, Human Rights Council, also, leaving the Paris Agreement, or engaging in a war trade with China. In addition, the sound case with the US drone strike in Iran[3] have drawn diverse

[1] Orban Defends Hungary's Good Relations With Russia, RFE/RL, 30 October 2019, https://www.rferl.org/a/putin-to-visit-eu-nation-hungary-as-russian-presence-grows/30243531.html
[2] Madeleine Carisle, „Trump Defends 'America First' Policy in U.N. Speech, Says the Future Belongs to 'Patriots' Over 'Globalists'", Time, 24 September 2019, https://time.com/5684890/trump-un-address-america-first/
[3] US kills Iran general Qassem Suleimani in strike ordered by Trump, The Guardian, January 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/03/baghdad-airport-iraq-attack-deaths-iran-us-tensions

reactions and high concerns among the European political actors as regards possible tension escalation in the Middle East and beyond.

It's obvious that currently relying on the US support is under the question. However, it had a heavy impact on the foremost European countries and on the EU itself, determining them to rethink their foreign and security polices without counting on someone's external support.

The future of the European Union, while struggling with an institutional crisis of its own, is putting on the risk the EU as a resilient political power. The main triggers of the current situation inside the EU are the lack of a common vision on foreign and security issues, as a Carnegie's researcher revealed a tough statement about it: "In urgent crises, when every hour counts, the EU is simply not a credible actor."[1] The EU's high dependence on the US security protection is a serious concern, which requires proper measures.

On the other hand, the French President Emmanuel Macron warned that European countries can no longer rely on US to defend NATO allies, by sustaining a scandalous statement that the political-military block is becoming "brain-dead".[2]

Along with these divergences: the refugee crisis, lack of consensus on EU enlargement, on relationships with Russia, BREXIT and its consequences, the uncertain partnership with US, in addition, having a China's rise as global economic power, make the EU more vulnerable. These challenges undermine the EU as a model of resilient and sustainable actor, subsequently directly affecting countries from its close neighborhood. At the same time, these challenges can be considered as a new phase of the EU transformation if its leaders take the advantage of it in order to strengthen the EU resources and institutional capacities.

In the meantime, the recent outbreak pandemic disease COVID-19, affected almost every country in the world at all levels, led to the countries' temporary self-isolation and the determination to prioritize the national needs and interests in order to save the their own social-economic welfare. The long term impact of the pandemic depends on the extent in which the international community will be able to unite its efforts to tackle the social-economic, political and military issues.

[1] Stefan Lehne, „How the EU Can Survive in a Geopolitical Age", Carnegie Europe, February 25, 2020, https://carnegieeurope.eu/2020/02/25/how-eu-can-survive-in-geopolitical-age-pub-81132

[2] Emmanuel Macron warns Europe: NATO is becoming brain-dead, The Economist, 7 November 2019, https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/11/07/emmanuel-macron-warns-europe-nato-is-becoming-brain-dead

In the end, either there is a credibility crisis between leading countries or a new phase is on the way to be established within a new international relations order. However, the geopolitical tendencies impacted on those countries in the process of assimilating the Euro-Atlantic values and principles, while Moldova is getting through a stagnation on its Europeanisation path.

The Moldova's (i)reversible Europeanization vector

The Moldovan former leadership under the Democratic Party left many discrepancies within the state's domestic and foreign affairs. Therefore, in 2018 Moldova was described as "a state captured by oligarchic interests."[1] Such an ascertainment stated by the EU has been the toughest so far, emphasizing a high level of regression of democracy and rule of law. Nevertheless, the fragile coalition created between the political bloc ACUM[2] and Socialists Party undertook the leadership in June 2019, when Moldova was on the brink of a grave political, constitutional and economic crisis.

The new established government led by Maia Sandu gave hopes to many of the Moldovan citizens including to its foreign partners for a new phase of country's development. Hereafter, it has resumed to the proper implementation of reform agenda based on the EU-Moldova Association Agreement. In particular, the reforms on electoral system, judiciary and prosecution service, bank and finance sector, the fight against corruption, freedom of expression and independent mass-media, also increasing the civil society's participation in the decision-making process. It is noteworthy that due to the Sandu Government's firm commitment to endorse the ambitious reform agenda it was resumed the dialogue with the main Moldova's development partners, namely with the EU and its member states. As a result, Moldova received the first disbursed tranche of 30 million Euro from the EU macro-financial assistance program of 100 million Euro total [3]. The received financial assistance aims at supporting to continue reforms in strategic areas.

[1]Petras Auštrevičius, Repporteur on Moldova, "Report on the implementation of the EU Association Agreement with Moldova (2017/2281 (INI))", Committee on Foreign Affairs, Parliament of the European Union, 15 October 2018, Brussels

[2] ACUM was a political block created in 2019, by the Party of Action and Solidarity lead by Maia Sandu and Dignity and Truth Platform Party lead by Andrei Nastase, aiming of joint participation in the 2019 Moldovan parliamentary elections.

[3] The EU has provided the Republic of Moldova with 30 million euros in macro-financial assistance, Cotidianul, 9 November 2019, https://cotidianul.md/2019/11/09/ue-a-acordat-republicii-moldova-30-de-milioane-de-euro-in-calitate-de-asistenta-macrofinanciara/

The political willingness to pursuing the reform agenda and strengthening a democratic and modernized country was shattered again. On November 14, 2019, the Maia Sandu Government was ousted after a no-confidence vote in Parliament.[1] An expected political movement on behalf of the Socialist Party and *de facto* their leader, President Igor Dodon. As a result, the new "technocrat" government lead by the Ion Chicu was approved by the Moldovan MPs two days after of dissolution of the previous one. In both cases, Democratic Party expressed in favor by supporting those decisions. Nevertheless, the proper reform process is put on hold by the current decision makers, and the relationship with the European Union have been visibly affected since the Chicu Government took leadership.

In this context, there can be underlined several main triggers undermining the irreversibility of the Europeanisation development of Moldova:

- **Lost momentum related to Moldova's progress on the EU Association Agreement implementation.** The self-declaring "pro-European" Moldovan political parties have compromised themselves in relation to the EU and its member states. Lack of transparency and stagnation in the billion-dollar theft investigation, high level of corruption at all levels, a number of media outlets controlled by small group of interests affiliated to the political leaders, hindering the activity of civil society organizations etc., represents just few major issues backsliding the Moldova transformation and modernization course.
- **A pro-Russian elected president in 2016, Igor Dodon,** created the premises for resumption of Russia's influence in Moldova, regardless to build a mutual benefit partnership. The controversial Russian credit of 200 million Euro, declared unconstitutional and contrary to the interests of Moldova by the Constitutional Court[2] is a prove of that.
- **Lack of proper political dialogue at top level between Moldova and its neighbors – Romania**, a perpetual advocate of Moldova' European integration vector and the main trade partner, **and Ukraine,** an important partner sharing common European aspirations and challenges.
- **A failed "balanced foreign policy"** assertively promoted by the President Dodon and the Chicu Government. According to its author President Dodon, the balanced foreign policy initiative stands for developing pragmatic and good relations with the West as well with Eastern partners.

[1] Moldovan Government Collapses; EU Calls Development 'Worrying', RFE/ RL's Moldovan Service, 12 November 2019, https://www.rferl.org/a/moldovan-parliament-to-consider-confidence-vote-in-sandu-s-cabinet/30265748.html
[2] Decision for the control of constitutionality, Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova, 7 May 2020, http://www.constcourt.md/ccdocview.php?tip=hotariri&docid=733&l=ro

This approach naturally raised critics and concerns among many political and civic opponents of the current Moldavian decision makers. Arguing that this foreign policy course draws toward a Moldavian passive cooperation and engagement, in particular with Western partners, unlike with Russia and CIS countries, and moreover, has no credibility and significant results.

- **Lack of substantial reforms** in accordance to the EU-Moldova Association Agreement, as there are no proper achievements concerning the justice reform, fight against corruption, or the bank theft investigation. Notwithstanding, the Prosecutor General Alexander Stoianoglo during a press conference[1] declared that Vladimir Plohotniuc is one of the main beneficiaries of the bank theft. Subsequently, the Moldovan judged issued an arrest warrant on V. Plahotniuc. However, the difficult work is just coming, but it is crucial to have a fully transparent investigation and prosecution processes, and the most important money recovery so needed, especially, during a pandemic crisis.

- **Promoting the narrow interests of a small political group** explains the real concern of the disbursing the second tranche of 30 million Euro from the EU macro-financial assistance. The main dispute on this issue between the Parliamentary opposition and the Socialists, backed up by the President Dodon and the Prime-minister Chicu, is the draft law regulating the civil society organizations activity. The law, one of the EU conditionalities, is considered by Dodon and Chicu allegedly a threat to the Moldova's independence.[2] In fact, the law aims at preventing political parties finance on behalf of the NGOs or charity foundations usually affiliated to political parties, which might affect the Socialists party during the forthcoming presidential elections. On the other hand, the European Parliament rapporteur for Moldova, Dragoș Tudorache[3] warned the Moldovan leadership about the upcoming deadline (June 2020) of voting those adopted laws as pre-conditions of accessing the second tranche, stating that beyond the electoral purpose there is no explanation for that political resistance.

[1] Press briefing by General Prosecution of the Republic of Moldova, 18 May, 2020, video, Privesc.eu, https://www.privesc.eu/arhiva/90878/Briefing-de-presa-sustinut-de-Procuratura-General-?utm_source=partner&utm_medium=widget&utm_term=live_90878&utm_campaign=redirect
[2] Chicu about the law regulating the NGOs activity, Newsmaker, 1 June 2020, https://newsmaker.md/ro/chicu-despre-legea-privind-activitatea-ong-urilor-ceea-ce-fac-unii-exponenti-ai-opozitiei-este-o-incercare-de-a-lichida-republica-moldova/
[3] Dragoș Tudorache: The non-voting of the EU conditionalities will deprive the Republic of Moldova of 30 million euros, Radio Chisinau, 3 June 2020, https://radiochisinau.md/nevotarea-conditionalitatilor-ue-va-lipsi-rmoldova-de-30-de-mln-de-euro---110188.html

- **Using the pandemic crisis for narrow political purposes** by the current decision makers, namely, by the President Igor Dodon who seems to be already engaged in an unofficial electoral campaign, strengthening its positions for the upcoming presidential elections planned for the 1st of November 2020. In this regard, he is carrying out a number of visits to families with children and elders, obstructing any protection measures[1], endangering those people and increasing the burden on the Moldovan exhausted system medical healthcare. On the other hand, every foreign aid from the Moldova's partners received in this tough time is more than greeted by the Moldovan citizens. However, President Dodon and his supporters greatly politicized the foreign assistance during the pandemic by praising the Russian, Chinese and Turkish support, at the same time undermining in particular the Romanian and the EU support in fighting the COVID-19. Suggesting that EU is coming with "beautiful declarations" for the Eastern Partnership countries,[2] stirring up critics from the political opposition and civil society, determining the EU Head of Delegation to declare his regret that EU is put in such a bad light.

Instead of conclusion

It has to be acknowledged that the nowadays world is facing an ongoing transformative process shaped by a number of challenges and threats. Subsequently, it determined the key political actors to accordingly undertake measures of response, making the national interests a priority again by reviewing old principles of collective cooperation. However, the recent outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic crisis can also be a driving determinant toward a future international relations system. It's obvious that less developed countries like Moldova will be more affected, facing a number of challenges if the decision makers are not properly engaged in strengthening the democracy and rule of law.

The above-mentioned triggers might affect the European vector of Moldova's development including its further cooperation with traditional foreign partners. Given the ongoing pandemic crisis that will leave a strong impact on the future of the international relationships, the Moldovan leadership has to review its policies in order to protect its citizens, but not political dividing them.

[1] Stela Unitla, „Recommended but not mandatory", Newsmaker, 15 May 2020, https://newsmaker.md/ro/recomandabil-dar-nu-obligatoriu-de-ce-seful-statului-nu-poata-masca-in-timpul-vizitelor-in-teritoriu-chiar-si-atunci-cand-merge-acasa-la-veterani/

[2] Stela Untila, „Dodon listed the countries that provided Moldova with 'real' support", Newsmaker, 10 April 2020, https://newsmaker.md/ro/am-auzit-declaratii-ca-sunt-gata-sa-ne-ajute-si-cei-din-ue-dodon-a-enumerat-tarile-care-au-oferit-ajutor-real-moldovei/

Achieving Moldova's democratization depends to a great extent on the quality of the ongoing transformations and reforms, as well as the imminent strategic response to the COVID-19 consequences, to prevent a harsh long term economic and social crisis. One of the possible scenarios involving the current decision makers regarding the furthering of the European vector of Moldova will be framed in a slow process of the EU-Association agenda implementation, without measurable results in strategic areas.

Another one involves the results of the November presidential elections and the possibility to conduct early Parliamentary elections. That might be an opportunity for those in opposition to unify efforts and take on the leadership. However, this is a real struggle during the current political situation, while the opposition parties are facing disagreements instead of agreements.

Although, the opposition' wining the elections and being strong committed to pursue the European reform agenda in order to overcome the political and economic crisis in a challenging and unpredictable period of time, it would create favorable premises to deepen the cooperation with the EU and its member states. But in this case, it is much needed a reliable leadership which Moldova failed, unfortunately, several times along its history of relations with the EU.

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O Realitate Ascunsă a României – Necunoaștere sau Nerecunoaștere?

(„The Hidden Reality of Romania – Lack of Knowledge or Lack of Recognition?")

Ionela Mădălina DODESCU

National University of Political Studies and Public Administration

Abstract:

I had the honor of being a part of the „Romania, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe in the New World (Dis)Order" Conference as a volunteer, and this article reflects some of my interests that have been meet during the duration of the project.

The first part of my article follows the international setting after Romania's European membership at the 1st of January 2007[1], underlying the diversity, the values and the new challenges related to gender inequalities in Romania. In their turn, these are suggesting new ways of understanding the realities of gender (in)equality in Romania.

Secondly, I aim to discuss the results of my research with the project, involving media monitorization in regard to women's representation in the media and the issue of women's unrecognized expertise in the fields of International Relations, Security Studies or Political Economy in Romania.

Keywords: *social perception, inequality, gender relations, Romania, media monitorization.*

Rolul politologului este de a observa lumea, și are atât permisiunea, cât și responsabilitatea de a descrie și explica atitudini și alegeri, cauze și efecte, utilizând concepte care să ajute la înțelegerea realității. La acestea se adaugă simpla proiecție destul de aproape de modul în care

[1] Piotr PRZYBYLSKI, „UE și România", Text, România - European Commission, 10 octombrie 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/romania/about-us/eu_romania_ro.

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lumea poate sau trebuie să fie înțeleasă, ori mecanismele prin care situația internațională sau națională trebuie explicată, distanțându-se de gândirea realistă și de efectele egoismului natural uman, și mai degrabă fiind apropiat de explicarea unor schimbări apărute în observarea realității, dar și a percepțiilor sociale, aici intrând ca temă de cercetarea și femeile văzute ca minoritate.

În acest context, este necesar de menționat faptul că folosesc termenii de „**percepții sociale**" în detrimentul termenilor de „**constructe sociale**"[1] tocmai pentru a apropia cititorul de importanța normelor, valorilor, ideilor, egalității de gen, și altele, de unitățile de analiză folosite, în cazul cercetrii mele - emisiunile urmărite, (provocarea mea pentru cititori fiind aceea de a critica după propriile percepții), dar și pentru a distanța articolul de domeniul Sociologiei, și pentru a-l încadra în domeniile Relațiilor Internaționale și Științelor Politice.

În continuare se vor prezenta observațiile făcute în urma monitorizării emisiunilor TV precum ANTENA 3, DIGI 24, B1, ROMANIA TV, TVR1, EPOCH TIMES ROMÂNIA-ORA DE VEGHE, REALITATEA PLUS.

În primul rând, cred că este necesar să subliniez esența, expresia a ceea ce se întâmplă în realitatea imediată a României, această dominație masculină în media, în sectorul public în general, și mi-am propus să expun dovezile că uneori doar bărbații sunt invitați la aceste discuții și întâlniri pe diverse teme, importante pentru toată lumea de altfel pentru că se expun puncte de vedere cu privire la decizii ce ne privesc pe toți, indiferent de gen. Menționez că se dorește echilibrul de reprezentare și apariție mass-media, dar și că se recunoaște integral expertiza bărbaților invitați. Ceea ce trebuie avut în vedere și necesar de modificat este acapararea masculină în scena conferințelor (*all male panels*), în mass-media. Iar toate aceste lucruri se întâmplă într-o Uniune Europeană care asumă cu totul alte valori așa cum prezint mai jos.

Uniunea Europeană este centrată pe valori, norme și idei, *printre care și egalitatea, promovând, în consecință, egalitatea între femei și bărbați [articolul 2 și articolul 3 alineatul (3) din Tratatul privind Uniunea Europeană – TUE]. (...) iar articolul 8 din TFUE prevede datoria*

[1] De altfel, diferențierea domeniilor este mai și mai importantă din moment ce discuția se poate confunda cu **construcționismul**, care este o teorie epistemologică din domeniile sociologiei și psihologiei, care afirmă că „oricare ar fi procesele de construcție „interioare", mentale, rămâne faptul că procesele constructive de importanță se reflectă în diferitele lor structuri negociate, rezultate pe care oamenii le-au fixat între ei în istorie la fel de importante (din motive sociale, politice sau economice, dar nu biologice)" din Edith Ackermann, „Piaget's Constructivism, Papert's Constructionism: What's the difference?", 5 (1 ianuarie 2001), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238495459_Piaget's_Constructivism_Papert's_Constructionism_What's_the_difference.

Uniunii de a elimina inegalitățile și de a promova egalitatea între bărbați și femei în toate activitățile sale (concept cunoscut și ca „integrarea dimensiunii de gen”)[1],

și conform „ art. 23 din Legea nr. 202/2002, republicată, se promovează principiul egalității de șanse și de tratament între femei și bărbați în vederea eliminării tuturor formelor de discriminare bazate pe criteriul de sex, în toate politicile și programele naționale”[2]. Astfel că, odată ce România a devenit stat membru al Uniunii Europene, are responsabilitatea și obligativitatea de a respecta și susține opinia femeilor în spațiul public și nu numai.

În al doilea rând, consider că este nevoie de o schimbare bazată pe echilibru, și dat fiind faptul că între 14.01.2020 și 28.02.2020 am monitorizat posturile TV amintite mai sus, între orele 08:00 și 11:00, am fotografiat cadrele, având un total de 294 de fotografii și screenshot-uri, și le-am selectat pe acestea pentru că nu prezintă doar știri, ci sunt invitați de la care se așteaptă opinii față de teme de interes public. Amintesc câteva dintre temele discuțiilor de la acel moment: alegerea premierului de către Klaus Iohannis, moțiunea de cenzură a PSD numită „Guvernul Orban/PNL – privatizarea democrației românești”, demiterea Guvernului (EPOCH TIMES ROMANIA-ORA DE VEGHE, discuții între Tudorel Urian, Nicoleta Savin și Adrian Sturdza), apoi desemnarea lui Orban de către Președinte, opinii față de creșterea sau scăderea pensiilor, alegerea lui Marcel Ciolacu în funcția de președinte și premier al PSD, fonduri europene pe care România putea să le acceseze, câteva dintre acțiunile pentru reîntoarcerea românilor din China în contextul Covid-19 (invitat special la DIGI 24 a fost Traian Băsescu).

Am observat că există 3 tipare, și anume: **1. doar bărbații sunt invitați să vorbească despre relații internaționale, economie, științe politice, probleme geopolitice** (lucru frecvent întâlnit la invitații de la ANTENA 3, B1, TVR1, REALIATEA PLUS-exemplu Figura 1); 2. mai apoi ori este **un invitat special (și de obicei este un bărbat,** lucru des întâlnit în fiecare dintre emisiunile monitorizate), sau **3. Invitatele femei sunt puține**, una sau două, dar nu în proporții egale cu bărbații. (spre exemplu, Figura 2 din data de 09.02.2020, pentru Jurnalul de Seară, DIGI 24 i-a invitat pe Dan Vîlceanu, deputat al PNL, Cristina Mădălina Prună, deputat USR, Ștefan-

[1] „Egalitatea între bărbați și femei | Fișe descriptive despre Uniunea Europeană | Parlamentul European”, data accesării 12 iunie 2020, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/ro/sheet/59/egalitatea-intre-barbati-si-femei.

[2] „STRATEGIE 24/05/2018 – Portal Legislativ”, data accesării 12 iunie 2020, http://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/203938.

Radu Oprea, Senator PSD, și Ion M. Ioniță, senior-editor al ziarului Adevărul și redactor-șef al revistei Historia, prezentator fiind Cosmin Prelipceanu[1]. Același lucru se observă și în Figura 3).

De altfel, consider că monitorizând aceste emisiuni am observat că se repetă pattern-ul conform căruia femeile invitate se află în minoritate, invitații fiind de regulă în majoritate bărbați, câteodată fiind invitați speciali (și niciodată o femeie). Pe aceste considerente Prof. univ. dr. Liliana Popescu a inițiat noul concept *all female panels* în cadrul conferinței „**Romania, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe in the New World (Dis)Order"**, echilibrând realitatea imediată a României și demonstrând necesitatea recunoașterii expertizelor femeilor.

În final, oportunitatea oferită de noutatea conferinței a fost urmată inerent de către noi mecanisme care au influențat percepțiile asupra spațiului public din România, comparat cu scena internațională, conferindu-mi cea mai apropiată deschidere către o realitate imediată aflată la limita acceptării, dar am înțeles și învățat că lucrurile sunt aparent normale până în momentul când cineva decide ca acestea trebuie să se schimbe. Acest lucru poate fi observat în mod negativ sau pozitiv, dar, în calitate de politolog în devenire, eu consider că percepțiile și realitățile trebuie observate din perspective neutre, fiind necesar să se conștientizeze dezechilibrul dintre apariția redusă a femeilor în spațiul public, stare de fapt care trebuie schimbată.

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[1] „Jurnalul de Seara 9 februarie 20 00", data accesării 14 iunie 2020, https://www.digi24.ro/emisiuni/jurnalul-de-seara/jurnalul-de-seara-9-februarie-20-00-3-1257921.

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Despre Necesitatea de a Extinde Numărul Participantelor la Luarea Deciziilor Legate de Politica de Apărare și Politica Externă

("About the Necessity of Women's Participation in Decision-Making on Security and Foreign Policy")

Mihaela-Adriana PĂDUREANU

Center for Eastern European and Asian Studies at the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration

Abstract:

In the following article I am trying to formulate a brief comment on the topic of Romanian women's participation in the process of decision-making in areas that have been traditionally dominated by male employees: defense and foreign policy. I will discuss on the one hand, the need to expand the number of experts participating in the debates on defense and foreign policy and, on the other hand, the possibility of increasing the number of women in leadership positions in these two areas.

Keywords: *Romania; women's expertise; international relations; patriarchal structure*.

În cele ce urmează, voi prezenta un scurt comentariu legat de subiectul participării femeilor din România la luarea deciziilor în domenii în care în mod tradițional au fost mai mulți angajați bărbați: apărarea și politica externă. Voi discuta, pe de o parte, de nevoia de a extinde numărul expertelor care participă la dezbateri privind politica de apărare și politica externă, iar pe de altă parte, posibilitatea creșterii numărului de femei aflate în funcții de conducere în aceste două domenii.

Majoritatea autorilor pe care îi citim pe parcursul studiilor de licență, masterat sau/și doctorat în domeniul științelor sociale sunt bărbați. Cele mai multe dintre teoriile despre care învățăm au fost formulate de bărbați, iar deciziile legate de cum răspundem problemelor de apărare

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și securitate sunt luate de bărbați[1]. Din perspectiva acestui articol, ne interesează componența instituțiilor care sunt responsabile de luarea deciziilor de apărare și securitate națională pentru a vedea care este numărul de femei și bărbați care lucrează în aceste instituții și participă la luarea deciziilor sau a căror expertiză este utilizată de către decidenții politici pentru a se informa și, eventual, a dezbate propuneri, idei, soluții și abordări în aceste domenii. Din ceea ce am menționat mai sus reiese că avem două criterii diferite pentru a evalua participarea femeilor la luarea deciziilor în aceste domenii: numărul de angajați și participarea la luarea deciziilor. Nu este obligatoriu ca un număr ridicat de angajate în instituții precum Ministerul Afacerilor Interne sau Ministerul Afacerilor Externe să fie echivalent cu un număr ridicat de persoane care participă la luare deciziilor sau care sunt consultate privind opțiunile de politici. Mai mult decât atât, deoarece numărul angajaților din unele instituții care au atribuții în aceste domenii este foarte dificil de aflat, această dimensiune este aproape de necercetat[2]. În orice caz, cel puțin la nivelul conducerii instituției, până acum au fost doar bărbați miniștri la Ministerul Apărării[3] și o singură femeie la conducerea Ministerul afacerilor Interne; la fel la Ministerul de Externe (dar au existat secretari de stat). Același lucru este valabil și pentru șefii Serviciului de Informații Externe[4]. Subliniez că simplul fapt că funcția este exercitată de o femeie nu este echivalent cu o eficiență crescută a instituției, însă arată cel puțin disponibilitatea societății respective de a accepta ca o femeie să aibă autoritate în domeniul respectiv.

În România, conform Constituției (art. 92), Președintele este comandantul forțelor armate și cel care prezidează Consiliul Suprem de Apărare a Țării. Rolul acestei instituții este de a stabili modalitățile de asigurare a apărări și securității naționale (art. 119)[5]. După 1990, este înființat prin legea nr. 39/1990 Consiliul Suprem de Apărare a Țării, instituție care are rolul de a identifica cele

[1] Afirmația se referă la România. Spre exemplu, în prezent în componența Consiliului Suprem de Apărare a Ţării nu se află nicio femeie: https://csat.presidency.ro/ro/prima-pagina/componenta-csat (02.06.2020).
[2] Marius Oncu, „În România sunt mai mulți angajați decât arată datele oficiale. Sute de mii de angajați care nu apar în Revisal lucrează toți la stat, inclusiv în serviciile secrete", *Profit.ro* (27.08.2018), https://www.profit.ro/stiri/economie/in-romania-sunt-mai-multi-angajati-decat-arata-datele-oficiale-sute-de-mii-de-angajati-care-nu-apar-in-revisal-lucreaza-toti-la-stat-inclusiv-in-serviciile-secrete-18184217 (02.06.2020).
[3] Galeria foto, Ministerul Apărării Naționale, Miniştrii Apărării Naţionale (Ministers of National Defence), https://www.mapn.ro/fotodb/ministrii?page=1 (03.06.2020).
[4] Serviciul de informații externe: Șefii serviciului de informații externe, https://www.sie.ro/istoria.html (03.06.2020).
[5] Constituția României, http://www.cnas.ro/casamm/media/pageFiles/Constitu%C5%A3ia%20Rom%C3%A2niei.pdf (02.06.2020).

mai bune modalități de apărare a țării și statului în timp de pace sau de război. Conform acestei legi, din componența Consiliului fac parte:

„președinte: președintele României; b) vicepreședinte: primul-ministru al guvernului; c) membri: ministrul de stat însărcinat cu activitatea industrială și comercială; ministrul apărării naționale; ministrul de interne; ministrul afacerilor externe; șeful Departamentului de analiză politică al Președinției României; directorul Serviciului Român de Informații; secretarul de stat și șef al Marelui Stat Major; directorul Serviciului de informații externe."[1]

De asemenea Președintele este și cel care poate convoca ședințele CSAT fapt ce atestă importanța acestuia pentru stabilirea liniilor de acțiune în politica externă. Legea 415/2002 art. 5 (3) stabilește componența Consiliului având în vedere schimbarea organigramei unor instituții. Conform acesteia, din Consiliu fac parte:

„ministrul apărării naționale, ministrul de interne, ministrul afacerilor externe, ministrul justiției, ministrul industriei și resurselor, ministrul finanțelor publice, directorul Serviciului Român de Informații, directorul Serviciului de Informații Externe, șeful Statului Major General și consilierul prezidențial pentru securitate națională"[2].

În cele de mai sus am arătat care sunt prevederile legale privind componența instituției în care se decide în legătură cu acțiunile din sectoarele apărării și politicii externe. Enumerarea membrilor instituțiilor sau precizarea istoricului celor care au deținut funcții de conducere a avut ca scop să arată că femeile lipsesc din aceste structuri. Evident nu este exclus ca unele decizii să fie luate pe baza analizelor furnizate de consiliere experte, absolvente ale unor universități de profil. Cu toate acestea, astfel de contribuții nu sunt cunoscute publicului, prin urmare este recomandată creșterea vizibilității lor prin alte metode, cum ar fi un acces mai larg în spațiul public.

Considerăm că discutarea acestui aspect legat de femei care să ocupe posturi de decizie este cu atât mai legitimă în contextul creat de pandemia COVID-19, generată de infectarea cu noul

[1] Legea nr. 39 din 13 decembrie 1990 privind înfiinţarea, organizarea şi funcţionarea Consiliului Suprem de Apărare a Ţării, http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.htp_act_text?idt=7873 (02.06.2020).
[2] Legea nr. 415 din 27 iunie 2002 privind organizarea şi funcţionarea Consiliului Suprem de Apărare a Ţării, https://csat.presidency.ro/ro/prima-pagina/legea-de-organizare (02.06.2020).

coronavirus. Numeroase voci din presă și din zona de analiză (suntem convinși că alături de ei s-au aflat și numeroși cetățeni atenți la desfășurarea evenimentelor) au remarcat că statele cu cele mai bune rezultate în gestionarea acestei crize au fost conduse de femei[1]. Nicholas Kristof aretă într-un editorial pentru *The New York Times*, că femeile aflate la conducerea statelor care au răspuns mai eficient la această pandemie au fost mai înclinate să asculte ceea ce recomandă experții. Pe măsură ce schimbarea climatică va aduce noi provocări la adresa securității statelor, va deveni tot mai necesară implicarea unor experți din domenii diferite pentru a răspunde cât mai eficient în fața acestora și, mai ales, deschiderea față de ceea ce aceștia recomandă[2].

Acest scurt comentariu a urmărit să arate că femeile lipsesc de la conducerea instituțiilor cu rol relevant în domeniile apărării și politicii externe[3] ceea ce are un impact negativ asupra răspunsului pe care îl formulăm în fața noilor amenințări la adresa securității.

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[1] Nicholas Kristof, „What the Pandemic Reveals About the Male Ego" *The New York Times*, (13.06.2020), https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/13/opinion/sunday/women-leaders-coronavirus.html (14.06.2020).
[2] Transcript: Bill Gates speaks to the FT about the global fight against coronavirus, *Financial Times*, 09.04.2020, https://www.ft.com/content/13ddacc4-0ae4-4be1-95c5-1a32ab15956a (10.06.2020).
[3] În acest număr al revistei într-un studiu privind participarea femeilor la dezbaterile din media Mădălina Dodescu arată că acestea sunt aproape absent de la astfel de întâlniri.

- Legea nr. 39 din 13 decembrie 1990 privind înfiinţarea, organizarea şi funcţionarea Consiliului Suprem de Apărare a Ţării, http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.htp_act_text?idt=7873.
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Expertiza Femeilor în Epoca Instabilității Post-Adevăr: Sugestii pentru o Nouă Agendă

("Women's Expertise in the Age of Post-Truth Instability. Suggestions for a New Agenda")

Valentin NICOLESCU

National University of Political Studies and Public Administration

Abstract:

The COVID19 pandemic has pushed to the surface many underlying issues in contemporary advanced Western societies, one amongst these being the emergence of public mistrust in authority and the facts, specific to the so-called post-truth era. This I believe to be an extremely important challenge for women's expertise in social sciences in general and in International Relations particularly and, I suggest, grounds for a renewal of the epistemic agenda and for the role played by women experts in society.

Keywords: *COVID-19, women's expertise, post-truth, international relations.*

Introducere

Pandemia provocată de SARS-CoV-2 a acutizat și scos la suprafață o multitudine de contradicții prezente în societatea globală, ce se reflectă și la nivelul relațiilor internaționale. Vorbim aici de probleme sociale, economice, culturale șamd. Odată cu închiderea multor afaceri – în special în zona serviciilor, comerțului en detail și (în anumite arii) a producției manufacturiere și de materii prime – agenții economici au fost obligați să renunțe la o parte însemnată a angajaților/elor. De exemplu recesiunea economică, prognozată încă din 2019, pare a fi fost grăbită de măsurile de sănătate publică adoptate la scară largă în întreaga lume. Acestea au dus finalmente către apariția unei noi dezbateri globale, ce pune față în față interesul de sănătate publică și cel

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economic, sintetizată probabil cel mai bine de expresia președintelui american Donald Trump ”să nu facem ca soluția să fie mai păguboasă ca problema” (Haberman&Sanger, 2020). Cu alte cuvinte, președintele american încerca să sublinieze faptul că, dincolo de efectele directe ale măsurilor de sănătate publică, efectele economice ar putea fi mult mai periculoase, atât la nivel individual, cât și sistemic. În mod natural, dezbaterea s-a politizat rapid, stânga părând a fi adepta sănătății publice și a închiderii economiei, în timp ce dreapta adepta redeschiderii și a imunizării prin expunerea masivă a populației. Covid19, de asemenea, s-a reflectat și în domeniul relațiilor internaționale, probabil cel mai bun exemplu fiind oferit de transformarea conflictului economic sino-american într-un veritabil război rece inițiat de partea americană odată cu lansarea acuzelor privind proasta gestionare de către China a pandemiei în zona Wuhan (Borger&Graham-Harrison, 2020). Mai mult, dat fiind faptul că SUA se află în plin an electoral, o serie de probleme ce țin de afacerile interne americane legate de gestionarea pandemiei au fost împinse la nivel internațional de către administrația americană prin vocea președintelui Trump, așa cum este cazul retargerii SUA din WHO. Și, pentru a încheia seria de exemple, trebuie menționat și efectul indirect pe care pandemia l-a avut asupra revoltelor provocate de uciderea lui George Floyd care, la rândul lor au devenit, dintr-un fenomen specific american, într-o mișcare globală de contestare a rasismului sistemic și a trecutului colonial al civilizației Occidentale: măsurile de sănătate publică adoptate – lockdown, stare de urgență șamd – care au condus finalmente la închiderea unor largi sectoare din economiile țărilor avansate, au rezultat în creșterea alarmantă a numărului șomerilor, în Statele Unite de exemplu peste 40 de milioane de persoane aplicând la ajutoarele de șomaj, ridicând cifra totală a acestuia la valori apropiate celor din timpul marii crize economice din anii treizeci ai secolului trecut. Criza pieței muncii determinată de pandemia COVID19 s-a dovedit a fi o serioasă constrângere structurală în determinarea protestelor legate de uciderea lui George Floyd, respectiv în privința globalizării acestora. Practic, se poate observa cum presiunea produsă de incertitudinea economică se reflectă și în violența inițială a protestelor, în numărul mare de participanți și, nu în ultimul rând în agenda acestora, care nu se limitează doar la reformarea profundă a sistemului de siguranță publică, căpătând rapid o latură politică mai amplă, ceea ce face ca mișcările de protest internaționale generate în această perioadă împotriva discriminărilor, rasismului și colonialismului să nu poată fi înțelese decât prin apelul la o abordare intersecțională, specifică feminismului în RI..

Din perspectiva articolului de față, ceea ce se întrevede ca fiind probabil cea mai importantă consecință a crizei o reprezintă prăbușirea tot mai accentuată a încrederii în autoritatea epistemică

formală, în ceea ce până acum era perceput ca fiind adevărul originat la nivelul canalelor oficiale de comunicare și susținut de către acestea. Emergența, în ultima decadă, a noilor tehnologii de informație și comunicare (generic cunoscute în domeniu ca ICT – information and communication technologies) și proliferarea social media a condus către spargerea monopolului informațional și comunicațional deținut de state și de un număr relativ mic de corporații la nivel global, și către emergența unor modele alternative de construire a consensului societal privind veridicitatea faptelor, fie ele fizice, politice sau științifice (vezi Keymolen, Prins&Raab, 2012). Cu alte cuvinte, oamenii nu mai au încredere în ceea ce li se spune, în cunoașterea care le este transmisă. Nu doar că nu mai au încredere, dar aleg și să o chestioneze greșit, și asta din cauza absenței obișnuinței de a examina critic faptele sau a unui instrumentar minimal de gândire critică.

Gândirea critică este construită pe bazele simple ale cercetării faptelor prin in/validarea lor în urma chestionării asumpțiilor cu care operează atât sursa ce prezintă respectivele fapte, cât și persoanele aflate în poziția de receptori. Este vorba despre două seturi centrale de asumpții, ce modelează acțiunile și ideile indivizilor – asumpțiile legate de relațiile de putere, respectiv asumpțiile hegemonice. Primele vizează identificarea și chestionarea relațiilor de putere ce permează uriașa majoritate a aspectelor vieții cotidiene în vederea redirecționării puterii, în timp ce a doua are în vedere ”procesul prin care idei, structuri și acțiuni sunt percepute de o majoritate a oamenilor ca fiind complet naturale, predeterminate și operând pentru binele lor” (Brookfield, 1997, 18), când de fapt ele servesc interesele unor grupuri minoritare ce au drept obiectiv prezervarea unui status quo ce le este favorabil (idem). Ceea ce este însă specific și extrem de greu de gestionat în cazul asumpțiilor hegemonice este faptul că ele apar ca fiind parte integrantă a culturii din care facem parte, a vieții de zi cu zi, modelându-ne comportamentele, deciziile, așteptările sau interpretările (idem). Indivizii par a reuși mai degrabă să chestioneze asumpțiile legate de putere, însă nu și pe cele hegemonice. Asta s-a dovedit a avea ca rezultat o creștere substanțială a impactului pe care teoriile conspirației l-au avut asupra publicului larg (dar și asupra unora dintre factorii de decizie la nivel internațional) în această perioadă. Probabil cel mai bun exemplu îl oferă tot Statele Unite, unde un sondaj recent al YouGov la comanda Yahoo News arată că nu mai puțin de 44% dintre votanții republicani și 19% dintre cei democrați cred că Bill Gates plănuiește să folosească viitoarea campanie de vaccinare anti Covid 19 pentru a implanta cu microcipuri populația globală (Romano, 2020). În mod similar, în România, o echipă de cercetători din domeniul științelor comunicării au efectuat o cercetare vizând impactul teoriilor conspirației

asupra publicului românesc. Rezultatele arată că nu mai puțin de 66.6% dintre respondenți consideră că virusul este produs în laborator, iar 49.3% cred că pandemia este produsul unei conspirații între corporațiile farmaceutice și marile puteri (Sultănescu et al, 2020).

Acest efect al tot mai răspânditului fenomen de ”alegere a propriei realități” specific așa-numitei ”ere post-adevăr” are implicații majore, impactând aspecte variate ale domeniului politic, de la cel intern la cel internațional, dovedind a căpăta tot mai mult caracteristicile unei amenințări de securitate ce trebuie abordată și gestionată ca atare, și cu ajutorul expertizei femeilor din domeniul relațiilor internaționale.

Feminismul în relațiile internaționale ale o lungă istorie de contestare critică a modelelor explicative dominante, evidențiind acele aspecte la care acestea fie sunt ”oarbe”, fie sunt produsul cultural-intelectual al hegemoniei patriahale, construindu-se astfel în jurul unor concepte specific masculine, precum cel de putere bazată pe forță sau de autoritate ca gestionare a violenței. Charlotte Cooper avertiza cu privire la faptul că ”aria subiectelor studiate, granițele disciplinei, preocupările și motivele ei centrale, conținutul cercetărilor empirice, asumpțiile cu care opeerează modelele teoretice, respectiv lipsa aproape desăvârșită a practicienelor femei atât în cercurile academice, cât și în cele ale elitei puterii și economiei, toate se combină și se întăresc reciproc pentru a marginaliza și a face invizibil rolul și preocupările femeilor în arena internațională” (Hooper, 2001, 1). Expertiza femeilor însă, se dovedește a fi crucială atunci când este vorba de problematici complexe precum cele amintite mai sus, ce necesită o înțelegere critică a realității (politice, economice, discursive șamd) și, implicit, o abordare intersecțională și trans-disciplinară.

Din această perspectivă, consider că este necesară o regândire modalităților educative de transferare/diseminare a instrumentarului central al gândirii critice ca model de empowerment individual și de grup, în paralel cu dezvoltarea unui model diferit de generare (construcție) și diseminare a autorității, în particular a celei epistemice, generată de expertiză. Astfel, se poate avea în vedere un model orizontal non-excluziv, centrat pe caring și impărtașire ca modele de învățare (ce poate fi originat de către femei, care au experiența istorică a excluderii), și nu pe tipologia ierarhică, tipic masculină. Un model care să pună accentul pe cooperare și nu pe competiție, pe împărtășirea de informații și cunoaștere, nu pe utilizarea egoistă în vederea capitalizării în termenii statusului sau poziției sociale în comunitatea științifică. In același timp, este necesară o abordare inter și transdisciplinară, în care specialiste din diferite arii de cercetare se constituie în grupuri de *peers* care să valideze cunoașterea, respectiv să contribuie creativ la producerea uneia noi pornind

de la datele existente. În același timp, chestionarea asumpțiilor culturale, ideologice ori economice și a modului în care acestea contribuie la structurarea unui discurs – științific, informativ, politic, economic etc – ca model de abordare critică este necesar, da nu și suficient pentru a contribui la schimbarea trendului actual. Democratizarea informației adusă de noile tehnologii informaționale trebuie să fie dublată de o reconceptualizare a ideii de intelectual public angajat, apeland la beneficiile pe care aceste noi tehnologii le oferă. Expertiza trebuie să încerce să iasă din turnul de fildeș al Academiei și să contribuie la educarea comunitară cetățenească, încurajând și participând la schimbarea paradigmei către un model de învățare colectivă, comunitară, care să presupună descoperirea critică a faptelor și eliminarea sau chiar taxarea interpretărilor construite pe asumpții hegemonice sau de interes al puterii.

Din pură perspectivă epistemologică, ideea de variabilă explicativă dominantă ca motor al construirii variilor tipologii teoretice trebuie la rândul ei contestată mai amplu. Ea exprimă, în opinia mea, un existența unui set masculinist ierarhic originar pe baza căruia, ca asumpție, se construiește însăși modelul cunoașterii. Nu discutăm îndeajuns despre conexiuni non-ierarhice între multiple variabile explicative (cu excepția, poate, a modelelor statistice multicoliniare), și între multiple tipuri de abordări (inter- și trans-) disciplinare deci despre un model explicativ integrat/or, deschis și capabil să se îmbogățească prin acumularea de noi discuții critice și, așadar, prin integrarea unor noi variabile în modelul explicativ propus. Asumăm, în schimb, în mod fundamental, modelul dominanței patriarhale, pe care dacă vreți îl putem numi *modelul alfa* sau *modelul unicului* (pe care îl regăsim, ca simplu exemplu, și în argumentele medievale în favoarea monarhiei) – o singură variabilă dominantă este necesară și suficientă pentru a fundamenta un model explicativ vizavi de o situație particulară dată. De exemplu, cum am observat în anumite medii moderate americane de dreapta, instituțiile generatoare de politici publice (evident, în percepția dreptei, toate democrate, deci ”de stânga”) sunt cele care explică ”rasismul” împotriva căruia mișcări precum Black Lives Matter (BLM) se poziționează. Teza dominantă este cea conform căreia instituțiile și politicile publice ce au decurs din acestea au dus către construirea unei ”subclase” de indivizi, toți de culoare, care apoi justifică nu doar discursul rasist, dar și politicile afirmative destinate combaterii acestuia (eg interzicerea discriminării la angajare conduce către nevoia agenților economici de a angaja persoane-token pentru a demonstra toleranța sau atitudinea pozitivă vizavi de minorități, fapt ce nu doar că nu rezolvă problema, ci o agravează). Acest tip de explicație mono-variabilă și patriarhală este extrem de nociv, pentru că alege – prin

asumțiile cu care operează -, să fie orb la o serie întreagă de variabile care, alături de cea instituțională, ar putea oferi un model explicativ valid și coerent cu realitatea.

Într-un interesant articol din iunie 2020 publicat în *The Economist*, Jennifer Doudna remarcă faptul că, în acest moment, procesul de producere, verificare și diseminare a cunoașterii începe să treacă printr-un profund proces de schimbare, în termenii comunicării, evaluării reciproce a rezultatelor și a diseminării rezultatelor (Doudna, 2020). Acesta, este, neîndoielnic, un moment-cheie extrem de important pentru reconsiderarea critică a unora dintre aspectele menționate mai sus și încercarea de generare ale unor modele alternative capabile de a contribui pozitiv prin expertiză nu doar la avansarea variilor domenii de cercetare, ci și la depășirea societală a carențelor induse de politica post-factuală. Feminismul, prin istoria sa de contestare și identificare critică a asumpțiilor cu care se operează în producția de cunoaștere, este probabil singurul care are capacitatea de a gestiona cu succes o asemenea provocare.

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"Niște Oameni mai Buni"

(„Better people")

Ioana AVĂDANI

Center for Independent Journalism, Bucharest

Abstract:

My article is a comment regarding the Conference's main topics and outcomings in terms of possible solutions to the issue of women's expertise marginalization in security studies and international relations. I propose three main approaches to this: the public policy one, the education policy one and the personal practices one.

Keywords: *women's expertise; public sphere; Romania.*

Un adevărat foc de artificii de inteligență, competență și putere de convingere a fost seria de paneluri ale conferinței "România și Europa de Est și de Sud-Est în noua (Dez)ordine Mondială", organizată de SNSPA la începutul lui martie 2020. Teme grele, teme de impact, teme numite în mod uzual "de forță" au fost prezentate unui public avid dar dificil, data fiind diversitatea sa: experți internaționali, jurnaliști, cadre universitare, studenți. Dezbaterea i-a inclus pe toți, dovadă a atmosferei stimulative și incluzive, în care fiecare opinie a avut spațiul său.

O conferință reușită, veți spune, ca multe altele probabil. Dar ceea ce a avut deosebit această conferință a fost că panelurile au fost compuse exclusiv din femei. Ideea s-a născut din constatarea că, în spațiul public, temele "grele", legate de securitate națională, de politică externă, de cooperare, dezvoltare sustenabilă și globalizare sunt susținute, aproape în exclusivitate, de bărbați. "Manelurile" – panelurile exclusive masculine – sunt prezențe curente pe ecranele televiziunlor, mai ales în momentele de tensiune politică – alegeri, crize guveramentale – sau în dezbaterea temelor considerate "tehnice" – economie, finanțe, apărare. Există oare suficentă resură

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umană feminină, cu suficientă competență și suficientă forță de persuasiune pentru a susține public astfel de teme? Conferința SNSPA a dovedit cu prisosință că da.

Și atunci, de ce nu se prelinge această competență în spațiul public și de comunicare din România? Și este România altfel decât alte țări din regiune și din lume? Și dacă vrem o altă stare de lucruri – obsedantă întrebare – "ce-i de făcut"? Orele lungi de dezbateri au creionat o serie de posibile și necesare căi de acțiune.

Aspecte de politici publice

Prima precondiție pentru ca lucrurile să se schimbe, pentru a asigura o prezență echitabilă a femeilor în spațiul public, de decizie și de comunicare (și nu numai), este existența dorinței politice. Nu numai în România, dar și în țările din regiune, în unele țări europene, politicile se decid în organisme dominate de bărbați și cu filosofii masculine. Facem aici necesara distincție dintre opiniile și atitudinile indivizilor, pe de o parte și practicile și culturile instituționale, pe de alta. Și dacă și indivizii, și instituțiile sunt macho, femeile sunt în fața unei duble provocări. Participantele au amintit în context politicile de angajare și de relocare, care ar trebui să țină cont de timpul pe care mamele îl petrec departe de copii și pentru care ar trebui să existe compensații, inclusive materiale (a fost menționat - și a stârnit aprige dispute - "bonusul de bonă").

O a doua posibilă soluție, și ea disputată, este impunerea de cote de reprezentare sau angajare. Criticii săi opun, de regulă, mecanismului cotelor de gen principiul meritocrației: se promovează persoanele cele mai calificate, competența ar trebui să fie *gender-blind*. Participantele au arătat însă că o obligație de reprezentare de gen silește decidenții – fie ei lideri de partid sau angajatori – să își lărgească orizontul căutărilor, să depună mai multe eforturi pentru a identifica sau stimula competențe la standard înalt în afara "suspecților de serviciu" care sunt, de regulă, bărbați.

Măsura cotelor de gen, ca și alte măsuri dedicate egalității de șanse, nu are valoarea transformativă dorită decât dacă se bucură de o implementare sinceră și sistematică, o a treia direcție de acțiune identificată de participantele la conferință. Implementarea formală – transpunerea în legislație neurmată de aplicare și verificare, eventual de sancțiuni, concentrarea pe numere, nu pe promovarea onestă a celor mai potrivite candidate pentru pozițiile respective - aduce deservicii atât pe termen scurt, neafectând situația dată, cât și pe termen lung, "justificând" abandonarea politicilor respective sub falsul pretext că "oricum nu funcționează, se vede".

Aspecte legate de educație

Educația a fost văzută ca strategie câștigătoare pe termen lung și cu adevărata puterea de transformare.

O primă direcție este creșterea capacității de comunicare a experților în domeniile științifice. Există o fractură, nu nouă dar nici pe cale de a se rezolva, între mediul academic și alte sectoare ale comunității, inclusiv cel al publicului larg. Mediul academic se află sub presiunea de a performa în interiorul cadrului actual, care valorizează publicarea în publicații științifice în detrimentul comunicării cu publicul general, care pune accent pe numărul de articole publicate, nu neapărat pe valoarea lor practică pentru societate. Dacă femeile din mediul academic vor putea să "vulgarizeze" (în sensul etimologic, nepeiorativ al termenului) conținutul muncii lor, profilul lor în spațiul de comunicare va crește.

O a doua posibilă direcție este educarea femeilor de a-și prezenta în mod convingător problemele cu care se confruntă. Adeseori, acestea sunt ocultate fie de rușine, fie din convingerea că "oricum nu se poate face nimic" sau, mai răspândit decât s-ar crede, pentru că lucrurile așa ar trebui să stea. Că aceasta este rânduiala "normală" în societate. Este necesară educarea femeilor în identificarea problemelor reale cu care se confruntă, în formularea acestor probleme și raportarea lor la politici publice existente sau dezirabile, în comunicarea asertivă și eficientă a acestora. Femeile trebuie să vorbească pentru ele și în numele lor însele.

Dar disparitățile de gen nu constituie problema exclusivă a femeilor. Bărbații tebuie să fie educați, la rândul lor, să devină parte a dialogului, a formulării, dar și a rezolvării problemelor. Discursul egalității de gen nu a fost și nu trebuie să devină antagonizant, pentru că drepturile femeilor nu se pactică în detrimentul celor ale bărbaților, iar sensibilizarea bărbaților față de problemele inegalităților pe criteriu de gen, ca parte a ansamblului general al drepturilor omului, trebuie să înceapă de la vârstele cele mai fragede. Influența mamelor și feminizarea puternică a profesiilor din domeniul educației pot fi circumstanțe adjuvante în dezvoltarea unei educații sensibilă la problemele de gen pentru toți copiii.

Aspecte legate de practici personale

Dacă politicile publice depind de o existentă sau nu voință politică, iar educația lucrează pe termen lung și are nevoie de timp și resurse, există lucruri pe care femeile le pot face prin modificarea unor practici personale.

O primă astfel de decizie poate fi crearea și extinderea, fie și la nivel informal, a unor rețele de experte, care să funcționeze ca burse de idei și informații, ca medii de solidaritate și sprijin, de promovare reciprocă. Femeile pot invita în panelurile pe care le conduc alte colege, pot ținti cu prioritate femei atunci când fac invitații de a contribui la volume sau de a face parte din grupe de cercetare.

O soluție complementară ar fi boicotarea (cu toată greutatea de conotații a acestui termen) evenimentelor care au paneluri exclusiv masculine, mai ales acolo unde expertiza feminină în domeniu este notorie și disponibilă.

În paralel, femeile ar trebui să se preocupe mai mult de creșterea vizibilității muncii lor, de construirea imaginii lor publice. Mass media, actorul văzut în mod tradițional ca cel însărcinat cu asigurarea vizibilității, în special înspre spațiul public, suferă, din păcate, la rândul ei de tarele inegalității de gen și a stereotipurilor și este percepută în egală măsură ca parte a problemei, cât și ca parte a soluției. Dar explozia rețelelor sociale a mutat controlul de la compania de media și jurnalist către fiecare individ în parte. Femeile ar trebui să profite de acest avantaj tehnologic și să acționeze – individual și/sau concertat – pentru construirea imaginii lor de expert. Educația tehnologică și creșterea capacităilor de comunicare devin, și din această perspectivă, obligatorii pentru schimbarea paradigmei femeii în științe și în mediul academic.

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Pentru persoanele versate în tematica egalității de gen, cele de mai sus sunt arhi-cunoscute și, probabil, la limita banalului. Valoarea lor stă, cred eu, în faptul că sunt rezultatul construirii unei experiențe de grup prin intermediul experiențelor personale, că încorporează un soi de cod general și uman valabil.

Cât despre necesitatea unor astfel de acțiuni, istoria nu ne lasă timp de îndoială. La trei luni după focul de artificii al unor minți sclipitoare – care sunt și minți de femei – Parlamentul României scoate în afara legii predarea în școală a "ideologei de gen", în încercarea de a reduce problema feminității (ca în *womanhood*) la sexul biologic.

Aceasta este expresia ideological și politică a întrebării – naivă, stângace și fără rafinament retoric – lansată participantelor, la finele conferinței, de un student la licență venind dintr-o țară balcanică, superb și arhetipal în strălucirea tinerei sale masculinități: "În fond, ce vă împiedică să deveniți niște oameni mai buni?"

Notes on Contributors

Ioana Avădani is the president of the Center for Independent Journalism. Her experience in media sums over 25 years, having worked as an co-editor for a press agency and a TV producer. Between 2004 and 2006, she was the president of South East European Network for the Professionalization of the Media. She was a member of the IFEX Council and the president of the South-Eastern European Network for Professionalisation of Media. She published multiple articles and studies dedicated to the state of Romanian maass-media. In 2013, she received the European Citizen's Prize. Ioana Avădani owns a MD in Anthropology from the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration and another MD in Applied Ethics from the University of Bucharest. She currently studies Anthropology as a PhD.

Claudia Cerasela Bănică is a legal human rights expert with an working experience of 14 years at national and European level in the area of fighting gender and racial discrimination and human trafficking of women and children. In the last years created the Human Rights and Advocacy Centre (CADO) which its main area of intervention is litigation of discrimination cases and advocacy at national level for changing public policies and legislation in the area of racial discrimination and human trafficking. President of Human Rights and Advocacy Centre (CADO).

Antonia Colibășanu is a senior geopolitical analyst, focusing on strategic competitive intelli gence analysis. She is Geopolitical Futures' Chief Operating Officer. She is responsible for overseeing all departments and marketing operations for the company. Colibasanu has joined Geopolitical Futures team as Senior Analyst in 2016, after working for more than 10 years with global analysis firm Stratfor in various positions, including Partner for Europe and Vice-President for International Marketing. In February 2020, Antonia joined as a full time lecturer the teaching staff of the National University for Political Studies and Public Administration, lecturing on geopolitics, geoeconomics and economic diplomacy. She works closely with bestselling authors George Friedman and Robert D. Kaplan and served as Honorary Adviser to Romania's Minister of Energy. Prior to joining Stratfor in 2006, Dr. Colibasanu held a variety of roles with the World Trade Center Association in Bucharest. Among other academic credentials, she holds a doctorate in international business and economics from Bucharest's Academy of Economic

Studies, where her thesis focused on country risk analysis and investment decision-making processes within transnational companies. She also holds a master's degree in international project management. She is an alumna of the International Institute on Politics and Economics, Georgetown University.

Mădălina Dodescu is currently pursuing a Bachelor's degree on International Relations and European Studies at the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration.

Anca Dragu is a Romanian economist with experience in monetary and economic policy gathered in top level national and international institutions, such as National Bank of Romania, Ministry of Finance, International Monetary Fund and the European Commission. She served as Minister of Finance from November 2015 to January 2017. In 2019, Anca Dragu became deputy general director and board member of the energy company EON Romania. She is also associate professor teaching Macroeconomics and Experience Economy and she is author of many research papers, articles and interviews. Anca Dragu holds a PhD, master and bachelor degrees in economics and finance from Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies, National School for Political and Administrative Studies, and George Washington University.

Alexandra Horobeț is Full Professor at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies (BUES) and holds a PhD in International Business and Economics (since 2003). Since 2001, she is Professor in the Romanian-Canadian MBA Program of BUES, teaching Corporate Finance and International Finance. She is specialised in international investments, international finance, risk management and corporate finance. She is Doctoral Scientific Advisor since 2011 and participated in various research projects on topics related to international finance, risk management, higher education and regional development as team leader or member. She is author/co-author of books and chapters in books published in Romania and abroad by prestigious publishing houses and of more than 60 peer-reviewed articles in academic journals.

Ana Maria Luca is a senior researcher with GlobalFocus Center in Bucharest, where she is also and editor of the Eastern Focus global affairs magazine. She covers radicalization, violent extremism, terrorism, ethnic conflicts and works in the Security and Asymmetric Threats Programme on research related to disinformation and malign influence. She previously served as an editor for the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network and a correspondent covering Romania for Balkan Insight. In 2016 she served as a spokesperson to the Minister Delegate for the Diaspora in the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During 2008-2016 she was based in Beirut, Lebanon,

where she covered Middle Eastern security, regional and international politics, terrorism financing and extremism for NOW News, a regional political analysis publication. She holds a Master's Degree in International Affairs from the Lebanese American University, Byblos, with a thesis in ethnic conflict and radicalization, an MA in Anthropology from the National University of Political Studies and Administration with a thesis on Korean popular culture and soft power, and a BA in Journalism from the University of Bucharest.

Valentin Quintus Nicolescu is a PhD in political science at the National University of Political and Administrative Studies in Bucharest. He is a member of the Center for the Study of Political Ideas(CeSIP) in Bucharest and also of AnA Society for Feminist Analysis (AnA-SaF). His intellectual interests are centered on critical theory, Marxism, gender and nationalism.

Ludmila Nofit started her activity in 2018 within the Foreign Policy Association of Moldova (APE) as a program coordinator. She held the position of Interim Executive Director at APE during July 2019-March 2020. Ludmila holds a BA and MA degree in international relations, the Moldova State University and respectively the Academy of Public Administration. Previously she worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova. The main topics she was fully committed to were the cooperation of Moldova with OSCE, Transnistrian settlement conflict and monitoring security developments at regional and international level. She was actively engaged in different topic programs and trainings provided by the ODIHR/OSCE, Vienna Diplomatic Academy, UN Women, Cligendael Institute, NATO etc.

Mihaela-Adriana Pădureanu graduated from the Faculty of Political Science at NUPSPA in Bucharest. She worked at the Center for Eastern European and Asian Studies at National University of Political and Administrative Studies. She has published a number of articles on the topic of European Union's neighbourhood policy, notably on the evolution of the Eastern Partnership. Her research and teaching interests include the history and evolution of international relations, theories of international relations and security studies.

Svetlana Stefanović is one of the original members that started the Belgrade Security Forum success story in 2011, and a BSF Executive Director responsible for the overall organization, implementation, and evaluation. She works as a Program Coordinator at the Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence, responsible for conceptualization, coordination and implementation of gender programs. She graduated in International Relations at the Faculty of Political Sciences,

University in Belgrade. From 2003 to 2018 she was volunteer, activist on different projects in the European Movement in Serbia, then worked as an Office Manager and Project and Event Manager. Her fields of interest include international relations, human security, women's rights, mentoring and non-formal education.

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