V. BOOK REVIEWS

CRIZA GLOBALIZĂRII SAU CRIZA SISTEMULUI INTERNAȚIONAL?

Liviu-Vasile ȘERBAN[*]

Book review of Melania-Gabriela Ciot: *Criza Globalizării sau Criza Sistemului Internațional?*. Presa Universitară Clujeană: ISBN 978-606-37-1864-9, Cluj-Napoca, 2023.

Keywords: *global crisis, globalization, actors, international system.*

The current era we find ourselves in is distinctly marked by profound social, political, and economic changes, changes that indirectly demand us to become more resilient and flexible. As Professor Ciot asserted, the International System is undergoing a process of redefinition, thus the evolution of events continues to influence the ongoing rearrangement of global actors (Ciot, 2021: 9). Today, the world is significantly different from what we imagined a few years ago, for several reasons. The dynamism inherent in the current global landscape underscores the need to be aware of existing global interdependencies and the necessity to develop global collaboration among nations. In acknowledging the dynamics of interdependence, it becomes clearly that the remedy for crises lies in international cooperation (Morillas, 2020: 6). As we will see, the volume discussed in the following paragraphs aims to shed light on crucial aspects of globalization and the current international system.

The volume entitled "Globalization Crisis or International System Crisis," coordinated by Prof. Dr. Melania-Gabriela Ciot and published in 2023 by the prestigious Publishing Press named Presa Universitară Clujeană, stands as a comprehensive analysis of the challenges facing the globalized society. The coordinator of this volume, Melania-Gabriela Ciot, is an eminent university professor at the Faculty of European Studies, Babeș-Bolyai University, with an impressive academic career marked by significant successes and contributions to International Relations and European Studies field. Considering her extensive experience, the volume ultimately offers a unique perspective, especially when addressing current crises in the global context.

This collective work gathers contributions from specialists, mostly doctoral candidates in international relations and European studies (or related fields), covering

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diverse and highly challenging topics that provide an overview of crises threatening the current international system.

Regarding the chosen title, „Criza Globalizării sau Criza Sistemului Internațional?" ("Globalization Crisis or International System Crisis"), it is suggestive and complex, inviting readers to delve into the depth of the topics addressed in this volume. The captivating title indicates from the beginning that the work discusses globally important issues, and the use of words such as "crisis" or "globalization" suggests an analysis of key aspects impacting societies worldwide, indicating an analytical and provocative approach. Moreover, the title urges us to look at complex and interconnected issues, encouraging exploration of the relationships and interdependencies of the contemporary world and, at the same time, exploring the subtleties of global dynamics.

In its entirety, the volume not only provides a detailed analysis, but also invites the reader to a thorough exploration of relevant subjects in today's current related fields of study. With 304 pages, the volume distinguishes itself through its comprehensive approach and exploration of a wide range of current topics. Structured in a clear and logical manner, the work begins with a foreword by the volume coordinator, urging readers to "navigate the turbulent seas of globalization crisis and find the courage to shape a fairer, more sustainable, and prosperous future for all." It then proceeds with three distinct sections, dividing the content into key areas of analysis: (i) EU as a Global Actor in a Changing World, (ii) Globalization - History and Present, (iii) Globalization and Interdependencies in International Relations.

The first section promises a deep exploration of the EU's role in the continuously evolving global context, guiding readers through a vast territory of challenges influencing the EU as a global actor. Topics within this section include: "The European Union - a reference point for strengthening and cultivating bilateral relations between the Republic of Moldova and Romania" (Aliona Rozovel), "The humanitarian crisis of 2015 affecting Europe. A turning point for Serbia within the European Union" (Ştefăniță Puiu), "The role of the European Union in the Regulation of Artificial Intelligence and the Metaverse in the Context of Globalization Crisis" (Oana Băhnean), "The U.S. entry into Afghanistan and Iraq, significant moments in the present of Europe and the European Union" (Dănuț Sopon), "Demographic aging in a globalized world" (Monia-Eliza Motorga), "Digitalization of Education in the Era of Globalization" (Marcela Tanaşciuc), "How the European Union addresses cyber threats" (Claudia Gabrian), "The political-economic and security situation in the Republic of Moldova in the context of a year of war at the borders" (Mircea-Ioan Matei), and "Romania and accession to the Schengen area. Analysis of the national approach in light of recent events" (Liviu-Vasile Şerban).

The second section promises to reveal the historical and current perspective of the globalization phenomenon and, at the same time, to guide the reader, from historical origins to contemporary issues, through a journey into what globalization actually means. Topics readers will find nuanced include "The role of indirect private governance in the spectacular return of the M23 rebels in the far east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo" (Andreea Bianca Urs), and "The Era of Globalization and Nationalism" (Ioana Mădălina Miron).

Regarding the last section, it addresses broad perspectives on the networks that define the contemporary political and geopolitical landscape through works such as

"The Internationalization of the Hong Kong Protests 2019-2020: between global support and individual struggle" (Carmen Ştefania Duţă), "Cluj-Napoca, from European Cultural Capital to Smart City. Rebranding: intention or necessity?" (Cosmin Irimieş, Laura Irimieş, Oana Raţiu), "Globalization - a 'hostile architecture'?" (Ion Mariş), "Japan in the Era of Globalization: Navigating the Challenges of a Crisis-Stricken International System" (Claudiu Aldea), and finally, "The global economy and rethinking globalization. From globalization to slowbalization: is globalization losing its charm?" (Anis Benabed).

Considering all these nuances, we can conclude that the volume makes an extremely important and relevant contribution to the field of International Relations and European studies, as well as to related fields. The analysis of global challenges from various angles and perspectives contributes to developing an understanding of the complexities and subtleties of the contemporary world. In essence, the contributors not only explore these challenges but also offer clear and well-defined perspectives with solutions to many of the problems the international system faces nowadays. In conclusion, we find that this volume stands out not only as an academic reference but also as a guide for those interested in learning more about what affects us all.

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REGIONALISM AND ETHNICITY IN ROMANIA IN PAST AND PRESENT

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Book review of Melania-Gabriela Ciot and Ottmar Trașcă (Eds.), *Transylvannian Review,* vol. XXXI, Supplement No.2, 2022, *Regional and Ethnic Communities Past and Present.*

In the *Foreword* of the present volume written by Ottmar Trașcă and Corneliu Pintilescu it is mentioned the fact that German minority enjoyed a special status in Romania during the leadership of Ion Antonescu, benefiting of "equal rights in all fields" with the Romanian majority. (Trașcă&Pintilescu, 2022:7). After fostering a stronger economic, political, military cooperation with Romania, German politicians from Berlin replaced the local leaders of German minority with new leaders more committed to the politics dictated from Berlin. Last but not least, the authors make a brief description of the articles presented in the present volume.

In the article of Ottmar Trașcă, *Pax Germanica. Projections of the Leaders of the Third Reich and of the German Ethnic Group to Solve the Problem of Transylvania between 1940-1944*, it is mentioned the cease of territories of Romania towards Hungary after the Vienna Pact when Romania lost 42,000 kmp and 2,5 millions inhabitants in favor of Hungary. (Trașcă, 2022:10) By this partition, Hitler tried to manipulate two states, Romania and Hungary, is the opinion of the author, making promises also to Romania that it might regain back its territories if it follows the policy of the German Reich. In Romania it was created The German Ethnic Group with his leader Andreas Schmidt which the author describes as a "state within a state", trying to find solutions in the Transylvania issue (dispute). (Trașcă, 2022:14) Concluding upon this article, Ottmar Trașcă says that there are proves that Hitler would have been on Romanian side in the Transylvanian issue if he would have reached the final victory.

Another article is written by Vasile Ciobanu, *The Press of the German Ethnic Group in Romania. Case Study: Schaffendes Volk.* The author presents the researches made regarding the German Ethnic Group in Romania mainly by authors like Johann Böhm, Paul Milata, Michael Kroner, Dumitru Şandru, Ottmar Trașcă, Florian Banu, Cristian Scarlat. German Reich used *Propaganda* in its relation with the German Ethnic Group. This propaganda was lead mainly with the help of the press. A tool with the hep of whom was lead this propaganda was the newspaper *Shaffendes Volk* which promoted the "work" considering the workers as agents of the "new world". (Ciobanu,

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2022: 28) This newspaper promoted German leaders such as Hitler, Göring, Goebbels, Robert Ley, etc and local leaders from the German community of Romania such as Schmidt, Cloos, A. Rührig.

The article written by Daniela Popescu, namely *The German Ethnic Group in the Romania's Propaganda Practices as perceived by the Romanian Authorities*, tries to define the concept of propaganda as "to disseminate or promote particular ideas" by lies and distorsion. (Popescu, 2022: 36) These propaganda tools were used intensively by Joseph Goebbels, minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, spred by television, press, pictures. The author intends to make an account of the propaganda practices of the German Ethnic Group during the time 1930-1944. In this purpose, research has been made in National Archives of Romania and National Council for the Study of Securitate Archives concerning propaganda practiees in Romania.

Ulrich A. Wien, in the article *The exponents of the "National Church" Together with the German Folk Group in Romania 1940-1944 on the Way to "De-Judaization",* presents "significant focal points of the Curriculum. Exemplary Christalogy". He shows that, during the Third Reich, in the German religions approach in Romania, Jesus was perceived as "messanger of God", not as Jew, but as a "Galilean". In Gymnasium, asserts the author, German students learned about "Christianity and National Socialism". (Wien, 2022: 62). Messianism was not an attribute of the German chancellor, only the faith.

In the article of Manuela Marin, "Two Souls in One Chest:" The Creation of the German Ethnic Group as reflected in the Romanian Press. Case Study: Universul", quotes Nichifor Crainic who was the Head of Romanian Ministry of Propaganda and who lectured on "integral nationalism" in a speech at the Institute for Romanian-German Culture in Brașov. By "integral nationalism" he understood to know "how to observe and love the ethnic genius of each national group" (Marin, 2022:71). His pledoary was to disseminate the German culture in Romania. The author presented the reflection of German minority in the newspaper "Universul" which was under censorship as the rest of the Romanian press during June-December 1940, the period of time analyzed by the author. The German state becomes from ally a guarantor of Romanian territorial integrity, considers the author. Universul's discourse was favorizing a stronger German influence in Romania on military and economic plan, attributing a central role to German minority in Romania. (Marin, 2022: 84).

Florian Kührer-Wielach, in the article "Hineingestreut ins überflutete Mutterland". Contigency, Integration and Identity in "Southern German" Postwar Discourse, expressed his opinion that, after the end of Second World War, Germans from Southeastern Europe felt somehow isolated. The method of work for this study it is historical discourse analysis and the time itinerary focuses on the years 1950. The bibliographical sources of the present article focuses on works published in Südostdeutsche Heimatblätter, on selected texts of Heinrich Zillich and fragments from two anthologies: *Wir Donauschwaben and Wir Siebenbürger.*

In the article of Virgil Țârău, *In Search of the Lost Archives. An Incursion into the Archives of the German Ethnic Group in Postwar Romania,* the author presents the objective of his research "Thus, the topic of this study is the fate of the archives of the former German Ethnic Group (CEG) in Romania, an organization that allegedly represented the interests of the country's German minority, but in fact acted as an extension of the Reich in Romania". (Țârău, 2022: 108) The author focuses its

attention on documents enacted by the Romanian state after August 23, 1944. For the completion of this study the author consulted the former Securitate Archives and Romanian National Archives. These archives were firstly ravaged by their creators (GEG officials). Another change in the Archives occurred after the deportation of Germans in USSR, then after their take-over of the Romanian Secret Service. A new change occured after 1945, after the liquidation of German organization assets.

Corneliu Pintilescu, in the article *In search of the emigration approval. Transnational and Local Networks involved in the emigration process of the Romanian Germans,* asserts his opinion that each East communist state developed special institution and practices to control the movement of people: "Thus, the closed borders heavily contributed <<to internal political stability" in communist countries" (Pintilescu, 2022: 137). Stalin's death is the opinion of the author had a strong impact in the movement of people behind the iron curtain. After 1960, it was an attraction of the West towards the citizens from Communist block. But the intention to emigrate to West made Easteners guilty in the eyes of their totalitarian states. Mainly, Germans and Jews expressed their intention to emigrate. Jews of Romania, shows the author, emigrated in Israel "in exchange for money or other economic benefits". Between 1968-89, 210.000 of Germans emigrated, also, in RFG in exchange for money and economic benefits. About these emigrations of Jews and Germans from Romania wrote authors like Radu Ioanid, Hannelore Baier, Peter-Dietmar Leber, Florian Banu, Luminița Banu, Florica Dobre and Cosmin Budeancă.

Melania-Gabriela Ciot in the article *Editor's Note* mentions the fact that old regionalism is bypassed and new forms of regionalisms emerged nowadays. Negociations influences "the establishment and the operations of regions in the international system" (Ciot, 2022:161). Regions are the subject of the regional policy of the European Union and they were created as "engines of development".

The author makes a brief description of the paper presented in the second section of the present volume *Regionalism, International System and Negociation,* containing "nine scholarly articles and three book reviews".

Melania-Gabriela Ciot in the article *New Regionalism and Enlargement Negociations in Central and Eastern Europe* emphasizes the importance of new regionalism in the context of Covid-19 pandemic "The Covid -19 pandemic demonstrated that the mature understanding of the role and of the networks of regions could facilitate the innovation of the functionning of globalization" (Ciot, 2022: 162), fostering the contribution of regionalism to "multilateralism" and "global governance". Regionalism was an alternative to a history of conflicts in Europe, for the newly integrated regions emerged from the end of Cold War, is the opinion of Melania-Gabriela Ciot.

Based on a qualitative analysis and having as research methods a case study and a comparative approach, this paper analyzes "the role of new regionalism in explaining the Europeanization process of Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries", namely the "European integration process" (Ciot, 2022: 163).

Firstly the author presents the new approaches of the new regionalism and secondly it provides the image of CEE region analyzed from the point of view of European integration.

The importance of new regionalism, emphasizes the author rezides in the fact that is "a current that needs more attention from the scholars of IR and EU studies,

mainly because it will provide a deeper understanding of the complexity and dynamics of the contemporary phenomena. It could be a solid basis for a complete explanation and clasification of the European integration process and of Europeanization" (Ciot, 2022: 172). Last but not least, the author wanted to emphasize the role of international negociations in the context of implementing the policies of the new regionalism. The author remarks the increase of the role of non-state actors in implementing the agenda of international system.

Jack Williams in the article *Place over Nation: The Role of Regionalism in Redefining Secession*, points out that at June 23, 2016, the UK citizens voted to leave EU in proportion of 52%. (Williams, 2022: 175) In UK, there were also regions who wanted to maintain UK's membership in EU (like Scotland). There were national parties in UK which opposed to EU membership of UK such as Front National, UKIP, Dutch Freedom Party.

The author emphasizes the principle of self-determination supported by Woodrow Wilson and includesd as Principle 1of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The author thinks that "The European Project is under pressure" (Williams, 2022: 184). The attitude of UK against EU membership was a manifest of "Euroscepticism", considers Jack Williams. A divisive nationalism within UK, lead to this politics of redrawal and isolation of UK from EU.

Mircea Brie, Islam Jusufi, István Polgar in the article *Is inclusivity necessary for the Legitimacy of New Regionalism? Unpacking the Open Balkan Initiative Negociations* assert that Balkan societies were influenced by identity cleavages during the last decades (Brie&Jusufi&Polgar, 2022: 188). Balkan societies knew, in the same time, a process of national-identity emancipation. Complicated realities are in Bosnia, Herțegovina, Serbias conflict with Kosovo and somehow, Montenegro is the opinion of the authors. In face of these ethnic conflicts, European integration appears as a possible viable solution. But in order to achieve this, it is necessary the implementation of institutional reforms in Balkan states. (Brie & Jusufi & Polgar, 2022: 188). For the moment, European integration in this areal is an "unfinished project". EU, USA, Russian Federation want to influence the region of the Balkan states and in this sense was opened "The Open Balkan Innitiative". There are states which are in favor of this innitiative (Serbia, North Macedonia, Albania) and others from this areal which reject it (Kosovo, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina). (Brie & Jusufi & Polgar, 2022: 189). This paper intends to analyze the viability of Open Balkan Innitiative in the Balkan states areal. This happends in the context in which European enlargement in Balkans is announced as a priority of EU. (Brie & Jusufi & Polgar, 2022: 204) This integration happends at differemt levels "eonomic, cultural, educational, security integration" is the opinion of the authors. Global crises which hit EU like "economic losses" and "socio-economic insecurity in the context of Covid-19 pandemic" hit also the Balkan States. (Brie & Jusufi & Polgar, 2022: 204).

In the article *Training the International Negociator* written by Paul Willem Meerts the author point out "This article will focus on negociators and negociations in a political and diplomating setting, in other words: on training students, diplomats and other civil cervants in negociation effectiveness, while confronting them with the fit between entitlements and bnefits". (Meerts, 2022: 212) The author presents a lecture on international negociations seen from a realist perspective (Meerts, 2022: 212). He quotes the context in which were signed the peace agreements signed in 1648 in

Westphalia which granted a new type of sovereignty belonging to states not to monarhs; in 1713, it was concluded the Peace of Utrecht, a peace unfavourable to the Dutch, but concluded thanks to French and English powers. Then the author mentions the Congress of Vienna with a peace agreement signed in 1815 where the greatest powers decided the faith of Europe. Then the author points out the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, in the aftermath of the First World War. And last, but not least, he mentions the viable innitiative that was the League of Nations, created after the Treaty of Versailles.

The author points out then the purpose of his article "This article presents the seminar developed and exercised by its author and a group of trainees from the Programme on International Negociation Training (Points). It deals with bilateral, trilateral, ediated, multiparty and mulilateral negociations, as well as with short exercises highlighting important aspects of the processess of international negociation in a political context". (Meerts, 2022: 223).

In the article of Radu Albu Comănescu, *A Historical Approach on Regionalism. Evolutions from Geography and Spatialization to Regional Alliance Systems,* the author concludes that the regions are connected with the fields of "international relations" and "European integration". He defines regions thus: "Regions are, to a large degree, political or functional constructs, with institutional support but not a priori categories". (Comănescu, 2022: 236) To build regions means to rely on new governance institutions and to enhance the existing ones.

The regional policy requires a broadly thinking of our range of actors, state or non-state actors, a strategic thinking that derives from "geographic and geostrategic appreciations" (Comănescu, 2022: 236). To build a region means to create a new form of identity, but also institutions and social groups involved in he decision-making process.

Gabriela Carmen Pascariu, Alexandra Cehan, Corina Brânzilă in the article *International Tourism Regionalization. Major trends and Shock Disruption*, point out that the development of international tourism is connected with the process of globalization and regionalization. The authors consider Europe as having the most important tourism potential with a regional dimension as 80% of the total tourism here being inter-regional. Regionalism is a trend that prevails to worlwide tourism. Tourism is also connected with the general increase of the living standards and in leisure time, these factors determining a growth in tourism activities (p.262). Last but not least, consider the authors, tourism is a "driver of economic recovery" (Pascariu & Cehan & Brânzilă, 2022: 263).

Mihnea S. Stoica in the article *European Identity as a Cornerstone of Regionalism. Perceptions on the Future of Europe*, points out that, during the last years, Europe confronted with several crises: financial crises, refugee crises, Brexit, Covid-19 pandemic. (Stoica, 2022: 267) This leads to the idea that European project must be "revitalized" and the architecture of EU needs substantial change. As consequence of these crises, "Euroscepticism" grew and also "populism". Populism creates an antagonism between EU elites and usual EU citizens.

The author concludes that his paper "adds to the centrality of identity in studies of international relations. Europe identity is what gives meaning and legitimacy to the political project that European Union represents" (Stoica, 2022: 275). In the end, the

author wanders which is the sense of existence of European identity and how can it help to the ambition plans of advance of EU project.

Merve Suna Ozel Ozcan in the article *A New Ideology in Russian Foreign Policy. Nationalist Eurasianism,* cocludes that "Putin's great Russia goal and discourses changed the perception of the 1990s s a society that lacked ideology and lasted only in the past. In this respect, the nationalism that they are trying to create in Russia reveals a Russian people's discourse that encompasses all segments, and Putin expressed it every so often". (Ozcan, 2022:292). Nationalism continued to emerge under the controll of the state is the opinion of the author.

Tudor Salanțiu in the article "The Regionalism Quest for World Complexity" asserts that "The complexity of the international environment certainly influences the overview of regionalism from the geostrategic perspective and undoubtedly influences regional integration process". (Salanțiu, 2022: 306), pointing out that there is a balanced view, in the future of regionalism, between historical perspective and the pragmatical perspective.

The present volume offers us a descriptive image of the German ethnic Group in Romania during the Second World War and its aftermath, and its inter-relations with other local communities from Transylvania and last but not least, the image of local regionalism, from the Romanian territory.

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NAVIGATING CROSS-BORDER REALITIES: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF 'THE LEGITIMACY OF NEW REGIONALISM IN THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS'
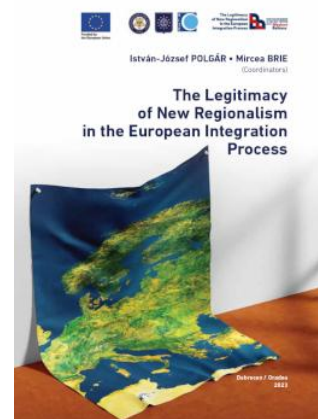
Claudia Ştefania SILVĂŞAN[*]

Book review of István-József Polgár, Mircea Brie (coord.), *The Legitimacy of New Regionalism in the European Integration Process*. Supplement of the Annals University of Oradea. Debrecen University Press, Editura Universităţii din Oradea, Debrecen/Oradea, 2023.

Keywords: *Cross-border cooperation, Civil society, Regionalism, Administrative decentralization, Migration issues, EU's response to security challenges*

The volume *The Legitimacy of New Regionalism in the European Integration Process*, published in 2023 under the coordination of editors István-József Polgár and Mircea Brie, contains a variety of papers that are focused on the cross-border cooperation.

The volume begins with an Introductory Study by István-József Polgár. In this article, the author presents the evolution of cross-border cooperation between Romania and Hungary, from the 1918-1945 period until present. The analysis of cross-border cooperation history shows how many changes there were in terms of understanding the space of culture, race, religion, city or nation, especially since all these factors have a great impact on developing cooperation. As the author states, the Romanian-Hungarian border evolved since the fall of communism: its status has been changed from hard, close, exclusive border to soft, open, inclusive frontier. (Polgár, 2023: 12-18).

The first Chapter contains five articles and it's entitled *The Role of Civil Society in the Democratisation and European Integration Process of Central and Eastern Europe*. Jubjiana Vila and Iris Buçiqi focused their article on the new regionalism, regional cooperation and reconciliation by examining the regional civil organizations in the Western Balkans. Focusing on the New Regionalism, it is stated that it differs from the other variants of regionalism by the fact that it involves non-state actors, such as civil society organizations, meaning that it focuses also on cultural and social aspects, not only on trade and security matters. As it is presented in the article, civil society organizations have always been engaged in reconciliation and regional cooperation, as they can foster tolerance and shared trust and provide direct

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information, working as intermediaries between the state and the society. (Vila, Buçiqi, 2023: 24-25)

Kudzai Catherine Bingisai focused on civil society organizations as they deepen democratic practices at the local and international levels in order to reflect, support and promote democracy, acting as checks and balance on governance issues. The author defines in the paper "CSOs as development actors that can contribute to the strengthening of socio-economic and political sectors and promoting citizen participation". According to the article, CSOs can only serve as a supplement to the government by encouraging it to act more responsible, open and effective in the interests of good democratic governance. CSOs in Romania have a role in "promoting governance structure, policy discourse and service provision", serving as an intermediary variable between the people and the government. (Bingisai, 2023: 42-45)

István-József Polgár uses the term "civil society" in this specific context as "a diverse range of nonstate entities, which can influence formal and informal territorial cooperation related rules, practices and processes". As presented in the article, even though since the Cold War is emerged the rivalry between the East and West because of how the idea of regionalism also included elements of competitiveness and regional fragmentation, the countries of the Western Balkan region share a main common goal, to be part of the European Union. There is a general belief that joining the European Union will be challenging for both the Western countries and EU, especially since there is a lack of progress in EU membership and, as the author presents, the EU's credibility and influence area has been undermined. Polgár concludes by stating that the view of civil society groups, even though they are crucial to the growth of territorial cooperation, and their actions in the context of territorial cooperation were adversely affected by illiberal inclinations. The political polarization is making it harder for civil society to interact with official institutions, also, simultaneously, the civil society sector is expending and many of the newcomers are less willing to operate inside the constraints of the system and engage in constructive discourse (Polgár, 2023: 72-80).

The second Chapter is entitled *The Role of Regional, Transnational and Cross-Border Co-operation in the European Integration Process*, and it is constructed by eight articles. Aurora-Elena Gavriș explains in the article that the administrative structure of the country is established by the Romanian Constitution and legislation, and according to the national law, the public administration system's structure reflects how public administration is organized as an activity. The author considers that the most suitable for the current Romanian society in terms of managing public affairs and within the framework of Romania's EU membership is the administrative decentralization principle, which transfers some of the decision-making authority in administrative matters from the state administration to legal entities separated from the state. In this case, these entities act as representative bodies of local communities and are elected by "universal, equal, direct, secret and freely expressed vote by the population with the right to vote and having their domicile in the electoral constituencies corresponding to the special law on the subject" (Gavriș, 2023: 107-109).

Reina Zenelaj Shehi and Dragana Kurti explore the factors that led to the formation of different types of regional cooperation in the Western Balkans and to determine the degree to which regional cooperation has altered the character of regional politics. As the authors explained, regionalism has emerged as a force that both threatens and supports nations' effort to adapt to the demands of globalization and

also to maintain their historical dominance in world politics. This means that states, especially new-independent states, willingly participate in regional agreements frequently with the express intent of solidifying their status as actors. The authors concluded by stating that while regionalism has been effective in introducing market-oriented programs and increase connectivity in the economic area, it has not yet resulted in the creation of a peaceful, stable and cohesive regional community with a shared identity. (Zenelaj Shehi, Kurti, 2023: 156-163).

The third Chapter is entitled *Security Versus Openness of borders. Social, Confessional and Cultural Differences Between Communities* and it is constructed by eight articles.

Svetlana Cebotari and Victoria Bevziuc focused their article on repercussions from the Russian-Ukrainian war, exploring all the areas of life that were significantly impacted in Ukraine and Republic of Moldova: economy, energy sphere, social, medicine, transport, infrastructure, education, ecology. The writers provide information on the negative effects of the conflict on the two nations, and it is clear that Ukraine suffers the most from both the perspective of the areas mentioned before and that of its people. The authors conclude by pointing out that the side effects of war will be felt for many years to come, but minimizing them will largely depend on governments working together to increase their capabilities and efforts, especially the Western powers whose elimination of damage is conditioned by the invasion of Ukraine by Russia (Cebotari, Bevziuc, 2023: 208-219).

Dragoș Dărăbăneanu and Ionuț-Mihai Oprea's article is based on a 2020 diagnostic study that explores migration issues in Bihor-Hajdu-Bihar cross-border region and it is focused on problems related to border security, illegal migration, human trafficking, cross-border transit, and labor force movement, with the aim of understanding the impact of borders on the construction of European identity and assessing whether they have a positive, negative, or neutral effect. As stated, the European Union has difficulties fighting cultural homogeneity and harmonizing values, especially because of how migration affects national groups. The study's authors discuss public interventions in the field of migration and emphasize the need to avoid formalizing policies that impede the development of cultural networks. The analysis of migration is presented as a methodological model, which is important given its role in Romania's failure to join Schengen (Dărăbăneanu, Oprea, 2023: 227-229).

Mircea Ioan Matei's article critically assesses the effectiveness of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine analyzing both the good and the bad, with an emphasis on soft power strategies and a mixed technique that uses focus groups and surveys to assess its applicability. On the positive sides, the author stated that the OSCE and SMM were crucial in lowering tensions, facilitating infrastructure repairs, supplying independent information, holding violators accountable, and, even though their influence on human rights was limited in separatist areas, serving as a deterrent to violence. On the negative side, they faced limitations such as lack of enforcement power, access constraints and other obstacles were funding dependency on OSCE member nations, criticism for not stopping the violence, and Russia's veto that resulted in the mission ceasing (Matei, 2023: 238-239).

The focus of the article written by Florentina Chirodea and Ioana Lucia Bordeianu is on the EU's active response to security challenges, particularly at its

external borders following the war in Ukraine. It underscores the importance of information exchange to combat illegal immigration, terrorism, and cross-border criminality. The analysis conducted by the authors affirms that the establishment of Frontex, now known as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, was a strategic decision aligned with the EU's integration process and the principle of free movement. Despite increased budget and capabilities post the 2015 migration crisis, challenges persist due to Member States' reluctance to relinquish national sovereignty. The implementation of the Entry-Exit System and ETIAS, coupled with close cooperation between Frontex and Member States, is deemed essential for securing borders and managing growing traveler numbers, supporting the hypothesis regarding the future role of biometrics in border management (Chirodea, Bordeianu, 2023: 253-254).

Cristina Ejova presented in her article how the rise of terrorism in Europe in the early 1970s led to the establishment of specialized anti-terrorism legislation, prompting collaborative efforts among European states for national and international legal frameworks. Today, the European Union and the Council of Europe actively contribute to effective counterterrorism policies, upholding values like human rights and the rule of law. Additionally, the OSCE plays a crucial role in consolidating joint counterterrorism initiatives in the region (Ejova, 2023: 268-269).

Cebotari and Buzev's article assesses the challenges faced by the Republic of Moldova in managing the refugee crisis stemming from the Russo-Ukrainian war. It focuses on issues such as providing humanitarian aid and safeguarding the rights of refugees within Moldova. The article discusses security risks, potential terrorism, and broad implications of the Ukrainian refugee crisis. It emphasizes the need for a collective response from EU Member States, aspirants, and Moldova, as millions, mainly women and children, are displaced, posing challenges for regional stability. The author concluded by stating that the refugee crisis from the Russian aggression in Ukraine underscores the Republic of Moldova's efficient response, emphasizing the need for a new national security strategy aligned with European principles (Buzev, 2023: 272-279).

Mircea Brie concludes the chapter by exploring the intricate relationship between linguistic individualization and political motivations in Eastern and Balkan Europe, focusing on the Republic of Moldova and Northern Macedonia. The study traces the historical evolution of national consciousness in the European space and underscores recent challenges to a unified European identity. Moldova's identity controversies, notably the Moldovanism debate, concluded in 2013 with the recognition of Romanian as the official language. The analysis delves into geopolitical influences, script selection, and identity boundaries, drawing parallels to identity challenges in North Macedonia. Survey data reveals a reluctance to compromise on historical narratives, language, and minority status. The author emphasizes the central role of language in shaping identity, shaped by geopolitical dynamics (Brie, 2023: 283-293)

The last chapter entitled *Europenization & Eurosceptism. New Policy Trends in South Eastern Europe*, containing eight articles, it is initiated by Radu Vladimir Rauta, exploring the evolution of whistleblowing in the European Union's rule of law context. Utilizing a rational choice institutionalist perspective, Rauta examines Serbia, Albania, and Kosovo as case studies, emphasizing EU conditionality. Whistleblowing, seen as an act of justice or dissent, involves revealing significant wrongdoings in the public interest. The study underscores factors influencing effectiveness and the EU's

role in promoting whistleblowing through civil society engagement in the Western Balkans, particularly evident in Serbia and Kosovo. The research portrays diverse EU support levels for whistleblower protection laws in Serbia, Albania and Kosovo, attributing Serbia's progress to external influence, highlighting the challenges of Albania's early adoption, and emphasizing the need for robust top-down initiatives in Kosovo's institutional design (Rauta, 2023: 299-310).

Avdi Smajljaj's paper examines the transformed geopolitical landscape in the Western Balkans post-Ukraine war, spotlighting the competitive roles of the US, EU, and Russia. The analysis underscores historical rivalries, Russia's strategies in maintaining a balancing act, and the EU and US responses to increased competition from Russia and China. The study emphasizes the need for a reassessment of the enlargement process, focusing on resolving regional challenges and promoting economic and political reforms to counter non-democratic influences (Smajljaj, 2023: 319-324).

The article written by Cătălin-Gabriel Done aims to assess how economic integration in Scandinavia navigates the balance between open trade and protecting domestic industries, revealing the region's economic significance and challenges. Protectionist measures coexist with regional collaboration, reflecting the nuanced approach to balancing national interests and global trade (Done, 2023: 336-342).

Edina Lilla Mészáros's article examines Serbia's evolving relationship with the European Union (EU) through a two-decade analysis of public opinion. The study reveals persistent ambivalence among Serbian citizens regarding EU membership, citing the Kosovo issue, dissatisfaction with EU conditionality, and an oscillation between the EU and Russia as influential factors. The paper concludes that Serbian citizens prioritize tangible gains over normative values in their EU relationship and highlights the significant role of public opinion in shaping future actions (Mészáros, 2023: 352-362).

The article by Balázs Horváthy, László Knapp, and Nikolett Trenyisán-Papp explores new regionalism in the context of the EU's regional policy, specifically focusing on challenges faced by border regions. It delves into legal and administrative barriers hindering their development and examines the European Commission's proposal for a mechanism to address these issues. The study provides historical context, traces the evolution of EU border policies, and discusses initiatives and instruments contributing to resolving challenges in border regions (Horváthy, Knapp, Trenyisán-Papp, 2023: 367-381).

The main goal of Dan Apăteanu's paper is to provide a comprehensive overview of the European Union (EU), covering its structure, historical origins, key institutions, and unique characteristics. The paper delves into the EU's involvement in various policy areas, its expansion, and the evolution of decision-making processes, with a focus on the growing influence of the European Parliament. Additionally, it explores key treaties, appointment procedures, the impact of the financial crisis, and theoretical frameworks, contributing to a deeper understanding of the EU's development and potential challenges to its integration (Apăteanu, 2023: 291-292).

The article by Zsolt Radics and Enikő Harman examines the challenges faced by Central European countries, with a focus on Hungary, following the 2004 EU enlargement. Emphasis is placed on the development gap and the role of regional policy in addressing it. The study analyzes Hungary's response to challenges over four phases (2004-06, 2007-2013, 2014-2020, and 2021-27), exploring shifts in objectives,

programs, and institutional frameworks within EU regional policy. The findings reflect Hungary's adaptation to changing EU frameworks, revealing a dynamic interplay between centralization and decentralization (Radics, Harman, 2023: 395-399).

The chapter concludes with Zsolt-Botond Bottyan's article, which explores liberal democracy as a response to the historical evolution of the North Atlantic center. It asserts that liberal democracy requires specific conditions—economic prosperity, cultural legitimation, and social cohesion—to function effectively. The article argues that social cohesion relies on an integrative culture fostering a shared identity, and multicultural societies, including the EU, may face challenges in maintaining a functioning democratic system. The Brexit referendum, emphasizing national identity, highlights political and cultural divergences within the EU. The article calls for a re-examination of preconceived ideas about Europe's future, advocating for a responsible strategy that preserves national cultures and differences to ensure the survival of democracy and European cooperation (Bottyan. 2023: 404-415).

In summary, the Volume offers a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted challenges and opportunities in the European integration process. The inclusion of varied perspectives adds richness to the narrative, contributing to a holistic exploration of regionalism's complexities.

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