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# **HISTORICAL REGIONS IN THE STRUCTURES OF EUROPEAN UNION**

**General issues and policy of European Union  
towards historical regions**

**REGION AND REGIONALISM  
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## FOREWORD

The previous, ninth tome of *Region and Regionalism*, released in 2009, was entirely related to the issue of historical regions. It spurred an ongoing discussion among the political geographers, which led to the conclusion that the topic should be continued in the following tome of R&R. That is why the present tome has been also dedicated to the issue of historical regions, focusing mainly on *Historical regions in the structures of European Union*.

A large number of articles, as well as the wide spectrum of their topics, resulted in tome 10, being divided into 2 volumes (it has also been a common practice in case of the previous four editions of the *Region and Regionalism* series since 2003).

Volume 1, titled *General problems and policy of European Union towards historical regions*, is mainly related to general issues of historical regions, functioning within the EU and its policy towards the historical regions. The presented tome is a result of the cooperation between the authors, mainly political geographers from Italy, Israel, Poland and Slovenia.

The tome begins with the part titled *General issues*, dedicated to the issues of historical regions' functioning within the state structures.

The first article in this part is Gideon Biger's *On nations and international boundaries*, dedicated to the tendency of nations' distinguishing themselves with international borders but at the same time nations being born within the arbitrarily established state borders. In the next article "*Europe of regions*" – *the discourse on the future of Europe*, Magdalena Deptuła concentrates on the issue of the Europe of regions as one of the main paradigms of the EU's regional policy, as opposed to the Europe of motherlands or Europe of states paradigm, in the perspective of the future EU policy. The following paper, written by Alessandro Vitale, *The re-emergence of historical regions, cities and enclaves in Europe vs. the EU's integration concepts, processes and reality*, is dedicated to the process of recreating historical

regions and enclaves within the EU space. The first part of volume 1 is concluded with Roman Szul's article *Charismatic personalities of mixed ethno-cultural background and their role in national movements in Central-Eastern Europe*, which addresses the key historical characters of mixed ethnical origin, who contributed to the development of national movements in Central and Eastern Europe.

Part two of volume 1 contains elaborations on the policy of the Western EU member states towards the historical regions (*Historical regions in Western member states of the European Union*).

It begins with an article by Ryszard Żelichowski, titled *Crises in the Brussels-Capital Region. Will Belgium survive 2011?*, dedicated to the current political situation in Belgium, where a world record on the "lack of government period" has just been beaten. It results mainly from the conflict on the border of the autonomic regions in the so-called Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde (BHV) area. The second article in this part of the present tome is written by Marek Sobczyński and is related to *Historical region of Luxembourg in the structures of EU*. It is a case study of Luxembourg, as both state and, in a wider territorial sense, a historical region. This chapter is concluded with Joanna Szczepankiewicz-Battek's article on *Lusatia as a subject of historical geography research*.

The last, third part of volume 1 is titled *Historical regions in Alpen-Adria Region*. A significant share of this topic in the Region and Regionalism series results from the fact that Department of Political Geography and Regional Studies of the University of Łódź is participating in the Upper Adriatic Geographers' Forum, which resulted in establishing contacts with political geographers from Italy, Slovenia, Austria and the Balkans, who actively contribute to the R&R series.

The first article in this part is the elaboration by Jernej Zupančič, titled *Geopolitics or geo-chessistics: The historical borders of the Balkans between small and big players. A critical analysis*. The author presents an interesting analysis of geopolitics and "geo-chess game" ("geo-chessistics") played by the superpowers in the Balkans. The next article, by Antonio Violante, is dedicated to the historical role of the town of Perast in Montenegro, as a transition zone between the Slavic and Venetian civilisations (*Perast, historical frontier town between Venice and the Slavic world*). The tome is concluded with Sandra Gladanac's work, titled *Kosovo's cultural heritage: unbearable weight or fundamentals to build on?*, where the author deals with a very up-to-date issue of Kosovo's cultural heritage and the future of this geopolitical unit.

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The editors hope that the articles, gathered in this tome, will broaden the knowledge on historical regions and their functioning within the political-administrative structures of the modern world and above all, within the member states of European Union, and will become an inspiration for further investigation and research of this phenomenon.

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Section I  
**GENERAL ISSUES**



## **ON NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Our world today is divided between more than 200 different independent countries and the numbers seem to continue to grow (*The World...*, 2010). Much of the new independent states, which were formed during the last decades, were formed according to national criteria. Thus, united, multinational Yugoslavia became six or seven (the independence of Kosovo is still under debate) independent states, not to mention sixteen new national states, which emerged out of the former Soviet Union. The creation of Czech Republic and Slovakia as well as East Timor, was also based on the national criteria. Moreover, the revival of ethnic nationalism with many people fighting for political freedom and territorial integrity on the basis of ethnic identity and solidarity can create more independent states in the future. On the other hand, there are many independent states, which are not based on national or ethnic criteria, such as Canada, South Africa or even Belgium. The European Union as a multinational entity, as well as the worldwide discussion about “borderless world” might point to another direction, in which the national identity would not be a major character of a state.

There is no single definition of what constitutes people, nation or ethnic group. *The Encyclopedia of the peoples of the world* (Gonen, 1993) used some criteria for definition, either alone or in combination: common history; distinct language, shared traditions, religion, or folklore; common identity maintained in the face of strong pressures to assimilate; self-designation and territorial concentration. There are about 2000 entries, dealing with different people presented in this encyclopaedia as compared with less than about 150 nation states. This raises a question – who is entitled to have an independent state?

The aim of this presentation is to deal with the overall pattern of the nation states versus the non-nation states in a global view, especially with the relations between nations, boundaries and states.

## **2. NATION STATES VERSUS MULTINATIONAL STATES**

The majority of independent states of the world nowadays are those, which are based on their national character. Back in 1975, Richard Muir (Muir, 1975) presented, after Kenneth R. Minogue (Minogue, 1967), a three-fold classification of form of nationalism (originally sixfold but the other three are not within a state):

1. The ante-state nationalism which developed before becoming a nation state.
2. Post-state nationalism which was developed from integrations of diverse cultural, cocooned within an existing state.
3. Third World nationalism, which is the nationalism of peoples who came together under a program of resistance against colonialism.

Nowadays, there are numerous new states, which emerged without resistance against a colonial government. Therefore, the second and the third categories can be merged into one. Thus, a worldwide view can present two main models for the relation between nations and states. The first one is the European-Asian (the Old World) model and the other is the American-African (the New World) model. As one of the main characteristics of a modern state is its international boundary, which delimits its territorial sovereignty, one can present this nation state model as a nation-boundaries model (Biger, 1995).

The first model presents the classical nation state – a situation in which a nation exists long before its state's international boundary is demarcated and the boundary is placed in order to include as much as the people of that nation. Thus, Poland is the country of the Poles as well as Sweden and Thailand are the country of the Swedish and the Thai people. This model applies mainly to Europe and Asia – the old world. Out of more than 45 independent states of Europe, only eight are not built around a dominating nation. Thus, the five tiny states of Lichtenstein, Luxemburg, Monaco, Andorra (also the only country in which the Catalan language is the official language of the country) and San Marino are not classical nation states. The

other three include Belgium, Switzerland and, to some extent, Spain. Those three seem to fit the other model. Asia's independent states mostly fit the same pattern, although there are some exceptions, India being the largest one. Despite the fact, that most of modern boundaries of the Asian states were formed by the colonial powers, they were basically delimited according to the dispersion of the dominative nation, inhabiting the area. Most independent nation states have some minorities, which do not see themselves as connected to the dominant nation but most countries are still nation state countries.

The second model presents a situation, in which the demarcation of the boundary line is the basic force in creating a nation. In such case, a new state was formed, with boundaries which have nothing to do with the dispersion of tribes, peoples or nations and the inhabitants of this particular political area, became, through a long process, a nation, which had never existed before. This model can characterize the American and African continents – The New World countries. Thus, Argentina and the Canadian nations, as well and the Nigerian nation were created by those who live in the area demarcated by a line, as they had never existed as a nation before. Therefore, it seems that in all independent countries in the American continent, from Canada to Chile, where nationhood is present nowadays, no nation had ever existed before the independent states were created. Some of the local tribes and nations, together with new immigrants from all over the world, mingled and created the new nation. In Africa the process was a bit different. With some exceptions, like Ethiopia, and to some extent Morocco and Egypt, most of the new African states were created on the basis of administrative, colonial borders, which never took the existence of nations and tribes into consideration. Thus nearly all African independent states have a multinational or multicultural society, which is trying to form a united nation within its boundaries.

The European states of Spain, Belgium, Switzerland and the Asian state of India can also fit this model, although they are not situated in the New World realm.

### **3. THE EXEMPTION OF THE MIDDLE EAST**

The Middle East, apart from Egypt, is the south-western part of the Asian continent. As the cradle of civilization, it belongs, in historical sense, to the Old World. However, its nation-boundaries relation fits more to the New World model rather than the Old World model. Up to about a hundred years

ago, the whole area was inhabited mainly by one nation – the Arabs, with some minorities, all under the regime of the Ottoman Empire. The main exceptions were the Turks, a Moslem nation migrated from central Asia, and the Persians, another unique Moslem nation. European mandate regimes, mainly held by Great Britain and France, dictated lines, which separated the Middle Eastern Arab nation into different mandate territories, later transformed into independent states. The mandate powers never looked at the dispersion of inhabitants of the area, thus creating new, independent states, which had no unique history of their own.

By this process, which took place in the 1920s, the states of Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan (then called Transjordan) and Palestine were created “out of the blue”. This process led to the creation of the Syrians, the Lebanese, the Jordanians, the Iraqis and other nations which had never existed before and were created by the boundaries imposed on the Middle East by the Europeans. Most of those independent states are trying to develop their unique nationhood but it seems that the tribal, religious and other obstacles prevent it from happening. The same held true for the Palestinians. A true Palestinian is one, who lived in the area called Palestine, created by the British in 1920. The name itself did not exist in the formal division of the Ottoman Empire (Biger, 1981). Those who lived in the British Palestine between 1920 and 1947 and their offspring are Palestinians, which never been united as a unique nation, before Britain created Palestine.

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**REGION**  
*and*  
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## **“EUROPE OF REGIONS” – THE DISCOURSE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE**

### **1. THE ORIGINS OF THE CONCEPT**

Europe has always been and remains very much a continent of regional identities. This notion, mostly popular in mid 1980s and 1990s, is still a subject of numerous debates on the future of our continent.

Whereas, in late 1990s the crisis of the nation-state has been emphasized, the role that regions and regionalism played in European Community was becoming more and more significant. Already in 1984, Hans Mommsen wrote that “the nation is dead, long live the region”. In 1992 Tom Nairn stated that regions had become the key part of the discussion about European Union. Few years later John Newhouse argued that “regionalism, whether within or across national borders, is Europe’s current and future dynamic” (1997). Even such a short retrospective proves the interest of this issue, which become the fundamental aspect in the contemporary discussion on “Europe of Regions” (Applegate, 1999).

The idea of “Europe of Regions” has been around for decades, though not necessarily in any coherent form. It has been seen both, as a slogan and utopian vision for regionalists (Loughlin, 1996; Borrás-Alomar et al., 1994). As a concept, it emerged relatively recently in the European arena and it concerned mostly the tendencies in European integration since the mid 1980s. Its origins can be found in earlier more or less influential works of, amongst the others, Leopold Kohr, Denies de Rougemont or Guy Heraud. This set of political thinkers preoccupied by the aim to create the political framework that would guarantee peace and democracy, defined a completely alternative political agenda for Europe based on regional significance, which simultaneously presented their skeptical attitudes towards the supranational

federation. However, despite sharing the common purpose, their visions of the role of regions in Europe were different. Leopold Kohr, one of the most prominent idealists from above set, argued that the principal cause of war is the critical mass of power achieved by states (1957). In his opinion the bigger the power and size of the state, the higher potential risk of conflict. Therefore, to preserve the peace Kohr postulated to reorganize states into smaller natural units according to notion that small is beautiful and harmless. Different vision of regions in Europe and a concept that had been around for a number of years was presented by Denis de Rougemont's (1966). In his further work he promoted the need to create regions as a way of re-establishing the essential base communities which he saw as a primary element from which the European Federation can be institutionalized (1975). On the contrary Guy Héraud focused his attention mainly on the role of sub-national entities in European federation. He distinguished three possible models of federation: economic regions model of federation based on economic boundaries, historic regions model of federation and ethnic model of federation, which as he reckoned, was the most optimal political structure. Moreover, he saw Europe as a federation of regions as opposed to a construction of artificial nation-states (Héraud, 1968, 1974).

Despite diverse approaches and differences in argumentation, all of these three ways of seeing the region present the example of abstract idealism, based mostly on moral values. Paradoxically however, they underline the need to defeat the current political organization of the state. These visions of their authors never came out beyond the utopian idea and never took realistic forms, although what is worth emphasizing the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a complex of economic and political processes that influenced development of European regions activities, seen sometimes as a kind of successful regional emancipation. The idealistic concepts were formed prior to the political processes of decentralization, regional economic development and interregional cooperation that increased in Western Europe during 1980s and 1990s. These processes were the result of the extension of European integration that influenced the creation of new perception, expectations and interests of governments on sub-national level (Borrás-Alomar et al., 1994).

In the late 1980s and 1990s, the term "Europe of Regions" became almost a commonplace. It has been used to describe all types of activities which have some sort of relationship with sub-national entities. Amongst other things, it became an argument propounded by national and regional movements or parties in their quest for a greater share of power or as a theoretical con-



ception on which to base their demands for independence<sup>1</sup>. It was also applied by some national governments in order to gain the EU financial support for their territories.

This wide reference to the regional dimension has also led to adoption of the concept of “Europe of Regions” by the media and some sector of literature. In this way, little by little sub-national entities acquired greater protagonism in political, economic, social and cultural spheres. On the other hand, nation-states experience a progressive erosion of their powers caused by two factors: the advance in European integration which reduces the autonomous capacity of national governments to decide about their future independently, as well as increasing dynamism of regional entities noticeable in greater say of regional and local institutions in the management of their own affairs and, above all, by the up-and-coming of new social movements, which, in some cases, have succeeded in altering a long established balance of powers between traditional parties<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, in many opinions, regional dimension was reflecting cultural and national division within Europe much better than nation-state dimension, therefore it was able to tackle more adequately with problems left unsolved by “obsolete” national structures (Borrás-Alomar et al., 1994).

The concept of “Europe of Regions” provided a background to regionalist party thinking about European integration. Regionalist parties found this idea attractive because of hostility to centralized states but also to the perceived impact of European institutions in reducing the powers of the state upwards, whilst the regional level of government would reduce the powers of the state downwards: a regionalist version of the withering away of the nation-state (Lynch, 2007).

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<sup>1</sup> Regional parties in Scotland, Catalonia and in Basque Country have used the concept of the “Europe of Regions” in order to appeal to moderate voters. In their opinion the idea of consolidation of the European Community is obsolete as states have accomplished their historical task.

<sup>2</sup> The example of the power of regional movements is the rise of the Lega Lombarda and the Lega Nord in Italy. These parties have succeeded, in less than five years, in gathering more than 10% of the national vote and more than 30% in their regional strongholds. This rapid outbreak has turned the whole Italian political situation upside down and greatly contributed to the collapse of the established political system.

## **2. REGIONS AT THE EUROPEAN UNION ARENA**

In the late 1980s and early 1990s the idea of “Europe of Regions” gained political attention within the European Union. In 1988, due to European Union’s structural fund reforms, regional governments got a new level of prominence, which resulted in creation of Committee of the Regions as a corporate and consultative body within the EU representing all regional and local governments (Loughlin, 1996; Kennedy, 1997). It also resulted in the passage of the Treaty of European Union (Maastricht), which gave regional governments the constitutional ability to represent Member State interests within the Council of Ministers. Together with institutional representation and recognition of regional governments within the EU, the efforts were undertaken to improve the regional level at subsequent EU treaty revisions at Amsterdam, Nice and then with the Convention on the Future of Europe (Lynch, 2007). In 1999 some regional governments had established the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Europe, whose aim was to promote the interest of constitutional regions within the EU. This body also gave rise to new influential grouping of REGLEG (Regions with Legislative Power) which sought to promote greater representation for constitutional regions in EU, but also to define role for the regions in the EU constitution, as well as powers and function between the EU, national and sub-national level (Lynch, 2004).

This short review proves that regionalism and regions have experienced significant development and attention on European arena, however it is only a small element of what would be a more ambitious vision of “Europe of Regions”.

## **3. THE TENDENCIES OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION VS. POSSIBILITIES OF INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION**

While looking at the aspect of integration and analyzing it in the context of levels on which this process can possibly take place, it is necessary to review European integration heritage. That will help to verify and estimate the potential of the concept of “Europe of Regions” as well as present the specificity of integration processes and conditions influencing them.

It is well known that international integration is a historical phenomenon that can be realized only in particular historical, material and mental circumstances. It can bring positive as well as negative effects. All depends

on the intentions of the countries that control this rather difficult process. Past ideas of integration were very diversified in this aspect, e.g. preferring humanistic model, aiming at expanding peace and well-being, as well as those (especially German ones) aiming at conquest of neighbouring and other countries.

Premises of integration were absent already in statements of ancient thinkers. They related to the need of people for integration into greater social units – states, for two reasons. One of them was concerned with boundaries liquidation between hitherto mini-states therefore with limitation of the number of wars waged for expansion of territories. On the other hand, there was need for power reinforcement towards outer lands, especially enemies. Debates on the subject of European integration in medieval times had two aspects: defensive and expansionist, both in universal and particular edition. Universal approach was fully represented by the Catholic Church aiming at integration of Christian Europe against the expansion of Muslim Turkey. Expansionist aspect was envisaging Turkey’s defeat on its territory and its Christianization. Obviously the then rulers were more interested in political control than in the integration of Christian countries. Disputes on international integration at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, during so-called accelerated capitalism development in Western Europe, were enriched with two important elements: economic issues and the aspect of national sovereignty of states.

Especially intensive was the development of very controversial German ideas of regional integration in Central Europe (Mitteleuropa<sup>3</sup>) at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. On one hand they significantly enriched previous output in the field of international integration with ideas of international economic integration, which could provide a counterweight to world competition. On the other hand, they were accused of imperialism and national chauvinism. During the interwar period views of Europe’s integration were represented by the Paneuropa movement. Since that time the development of integration ideas was strongly influenced by this doctrine. After World War II, its impact was even more evident. Having in mind the long evolutionary history of integration ideas, one can state that Europe, especially its Western part, was sufficiently prepared in material, structural and doctrinal aspects, for realization of economic integration. Unfortunately,

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<sup>3</sup> It is worthy to mention that German ideas of integration (Mitteleuropa) in many cases went far beyond Central Europe and embraced territories of e.g. in Central Africa or Pacific Ocean.

in the political elites of Western European countries, notably in Germany, England and Scandinavia (obviously for different reasons), there was an evident lack of political will for the implementation of this process until the World War II. Only after experience of the Second World War, after humiliation by outer-European (global) powers, which determined the rules of functioning for European countries and divided their influences in this region, Europe understood that integration of its countries is necessary. This led to the arduous process of practical realization of integration ideas which resulted in the creation of European Union (Marszałek, 1996).

This short review gives rise to the question about the room for regional cooperation in the integration tendencies dominated by the state level and political context. Apparently one cannot exist without another. While analyzing the influence of the institutional development of the European Community on the concept and possible practice of the “Europe of Regions” it is necessary to establish the link between Community and regional or sub-state territorial government. It is also essential to indicate the metamorphosis of this relationship during development of the Community. The importance of regions for the Community, and vice versa, was emphasized already in preamble of the Rome Treaty (1958) with the statement that one of the aims of the foundation was to ensure “a harmonious development by reducing the differences existing between the various regions and the backwardness of the less favoured regions”. In fact, not much happened in this sphere until the first enlargement of European Community in 1973<sup>4</sup>. Some positive changes were also expected after the establishment of the European Regional Development Fund in 1975, however with years its impact has been rather minimal (Kingston, 1990). On the other hand, the traditional focus on regional policy has to some extent obscured the significant impact that almost all sectoral policies of the Community have had on regional economics and government (Molle and Cappellin, 1988).

Through years the intensity of the influence of the concept of “Europe of Regions” and its potency was changing, as has changed the attitude towards it. Its significance depended on political situation and possibilities that were rising up in specific economic circumstances. It was mainly up to sub-state parties that, on smaller or bigger scale, adopted this idea to secure their political, social, autonomous, economic or other interests. Their responses to Europe and integration processes not only diverge across cases, but also across time. In spite of this, there are some similar tendencies and common

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<sup>4</sup> It embraced UK, Denmark and Ireland.

approaches to regionalism and policy evident in Europe. Eve Hepburn (2008) distinguished three stages of sub-state party goals, which explains the varied adoption of the “Europe of Regions” in time.

First stage 1979–1987 was characterized by nationalist and left-wing animosity to the European project and a focus on a state as a “giver” of autonomy. At this phase constitutional goals of parties were not yet tied to project of European integration. Instead, territorial claims were state-oriented. Simultaneously, regional elites were negotiating with the central governments about their bigger influence over state and regional policy-making, as well as the greater scope of autonomy and access to the resources from the state. This state-centred approach was about to change with the intensification of the integration processes and the growing popularity of a “Europe of Regions” concept.

Second period, between 1987 and 1995, experienced development of trends towards decentralization what was related with increasing possibilities of regional autonomy. At this point parties, previously seeking independence perceived alternative form of autonomy which amounted to a special place in a “Europe of Regions”. The opportunities presented by Europe seemed to offer a third way between independence and centralism. Parties started to regard Europe not only as a “giver” of autonomy, but also as a centre from which to secure resources, in particular the structural funds. During the mid-1990s most of them have adopted the goal of “Europe of Regions”, which was used to support a variety of territorial projects, including constitutional goals (being linked to federalism, devolution and independence), socio-economic goals (access to European structural funds) and protectionism (pushing back European competences). The most important viewpoint at this time was “let us in”. However, this way of thinking and applied strategies in this time were unsustainable. Despite facing similar opportunities and challenges in Europe, regional responses to European integration varied widely. While some regional parties viewed Europe as an alternative framework to the state for advancing their autonomy, others perceived integration as a threat, and sought to strengthen the state to prevent Europe from encroaching on their competences. Furthermore, some sub-state parties have advanced diverse understanding of “Europe”, either as a set of opportunity structures or constrains for territorial interests.

In the last stage, from 1996 till 2005, parties began to question whether their territorial strategies could be met in Europe. It was mainly the reason of ongoing weakness of the Committee of the Regions as well as parties’ failure in gaining guarantees for regional recognition in the European constitution.

This situation hindered the opportunities for regions to act in Europe, but it also put an end to cross-party consensus on pursuing regional autonomy in Europe. In these circumstances, some parties began to fall back on state channels and revert back to previous state-centred position by seeking more access and resources or protection from the state in order to ward off unwanted European influences. At the same time, other parties began to take more “Eurosceptical” positions. The increasing sense of Euro-skepticism surrounding the draft of European Constitution indicates that parties have loosened their ties between autonomy claims and the evolving regionalization project. This demonstrates the instrumental nature of sub-state party support for integration, for which adoption of “pro-European” attitude was the result of their policy aiming to receive more resources and increasing influence rather than demonstrating long term attitudinal change. Therefore, in this context, Europeanization can be understood as parties’ strategy to manipulate the dimensions of a given political issue, e.g. autonomy, economic resources or protectionism, at the local, state or European levels (Hepburn, 2008).

Even despite the 2004 and 2007 enlargements and EU extension with 12 new member states, the prospects for a “Europe of Regions” seem as remote as ever. However, given the unclear, utopian aspect to the concept, this should be not surprising.

This brings us to some kind of paradox, whereby on one hand, the concept of “Europe of Regions” has largely been discredited and finally has fallen out of favour, while at the same time, the level of regional engagement and activity in Europe continues to grow at an exponential rate. Regions themselves continue to operate actively in Europe. Their mobilization can be seen in many different aspects, such as creation of cross border regions, trans-national associations of regional actors or European federations of local government associations and such like (Hooghe, 1995; Moore, 2007). The number of regional offices in Brussels, which acquired international capital status for regional and local lobbying, has grown significantly over past twenty years<sup>5</sup> (Bomberg and Peterson, 1998; Moore, 2006). Regions from

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<sup>5</sup> The establishment of representation in Brussels has become the standard for regions from EU member states. They were established for variety of reasons, such as seeking founding, playing a political role at EU level, and raising the region’s profile and connecting with networks and a supranational community in the proximity of the EU institutions. The offices’ goals and activities have since converged and they now all seek to inform, network, lobby, liaise and market for their regions. Regions with legislative powers concentrate more on influencing EU policies. Because of the diversified range of functions that regional offices fulfil, they are relevant and useful to their home regions and likely to be permanent fixtures in Brussels (Huysseune, Jans, 2008).

new member states have been racing to set up their representative bureaus in Brussels<sup>6</sup> while others, older and more established regional representations are expanding their capacity in Brussels by deploying more resources, hiring more staff and moving to larger, better located premises in the city (Fig. 1) (Moore, 2006).

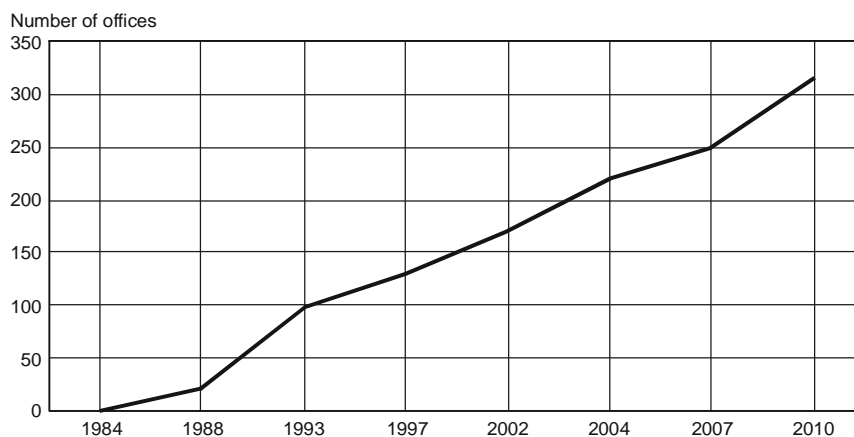


Fig. 1. The number of regional offices in Brussels, 1984–2010 (based on Moore, 2007; Huyseune, Jans, 2008; Homepage of the Brussels-Europe Liaison Office, [www.blbe.be](http://www.blbe.be))

In any way, representations in Brussels provide an independent profile for regional actors, and are the most visible form of this new regional dynamic.

#### **4. THE PRACTICAL LIMITATIONS OF THE “EUROPE OF REGIONS”**

Having in mind hitherto deliberation, it is necessary to ask about practical limits to a concept of ‘Europe of Regions’. Carolyn Moore from the University of Birmingham (2007) sees the weakness of the concept in diversification of goals of regional actors in EU. Indeed, despite their increasing presence in Brussels, they never managed to crystallize into single,

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<sup>6</sup> The first regional office was opened in Brussels by Birmingham City Council in 1984. Since that time the level of regional engagement in Brussels through the form of an independent representation has grown exponentially. The aim of these offices is to represent regional interests in Brussels. Since then, the number of offices has grown to 317. Some of the regions, such as the German Länder, are powerful entities in Brussels, with imposing office buildings and a large staff (BELO Home page).

powerful and coherent regional lobby. This significant diversification of regional voices in Brussels and lack of common initiatives can be attributed to three core developments.

First important aspect is decentralization across the EU member states which did not result in anything approaching a single “Third Level” of constitutional actors. Significant differences in policy competences can be found even across the strongest regional actors, below national level, which limits the possibility of joint venture to lobby on policy issues in Brussels beyond the constitutional regions. The second constrain for regional integration and cooperation in accordance with the “Europe of Regions” concept lies in attitude of constitutional region<sup>7</sup> representation, lobbying to differentiate constitutional regions from mere administrative regions and emphasizing their unique legal status. Therefore, in some areas, there is a clear preference for constitutional regions to form ad-hoc advocacy coalitions which deliberately exclude weaker, non-constitutional regions from their membership. One of the catalyst factors of such a situation has been the dissatisfaction with existing channels of interest mediation. The last noteworthy aspect lies in division of constitutional regions and administrative regions which resulted in emergence of the new fault line between regions from the EU15 and regions from the new member states. Moore points out, that regions from the new member states tend to be relatively new creations, which, unlike many of the strong EU15, do not constitute historic or linguistic regions. In her opinion, such a conjuncture is the result of national governments’ policy consciously aiming at cross-cut interethnic, religious and linguistic diversity of their states within the territorial restructuring programs

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<sup>7</sup> Constitutional regions, which are regions with strong powers and the ability to make legislation, emerged as a more coherent representative of Europe’s third level of government. They represented a unique subset of regional actors in EU with a delegated set of legislative competences. The Spanish Autonomous Communities, the German and Austrian Länder, the Belgium provinces and the Devolved Administrations of the UK constitute a vocal group of powerful regions, who together press for greater recognition of their unique governmental status in Europe, and a more powerful say within European decision-making processes. Common to all constitutional regions representations in Brussels is a strong political dimension to their work. Their role is clearly defined through the European policy priorities of their domestic governments, which are both their sponsoring agencies and their users. Constitutional regions, unlike any other regional representations in Brussels, can facilitate and support the work of decision-making officials within the Council, under the legal agreements of Article 203 of the EU Treaty, allowing regional ministers to take the negotiating lead, however with the support of the respective national governments (Keating, 2004; Jeffery, 1996; Moore, 2007).



throughout the 1990s. Moreover, these regions, as relatively young actors in domestic system, gain less support for engaging grand European constitutional issues, which results in limited EU funding (Moore, 2007).

Such a diversification of regions in Europe is also evident in the manner in which they choose to direct their Brussels representations, but also in diversity of aims, priorities or strategies taken to accomplish the objectives set by their governing bodies. Therefore, the direct engagement of regions in EU is differentiated and depends on the nature, specificity and internal structure of each region. However, the reality of ‘Europe of Regions’ is much more complex and its presence is not only conditioned by individual regions’ and parties’ approach.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Regions have been trying to influence European policy and gain greater role in EU policy-making since the mid-1980s. In spite of this, for over the decade, since the establishment of Committee of the Regions (CoR), their role in the EU has not been further formalized. It is mainly due to important differences in regional priorities between the CoR. Limited coherence in the regional group’s demands and the emergence of distinct, constitutional regions’ agenda led to the creation of new influential grouping of “Regions with Legislative Power” (RegLeg), which sought, however failed to get a special higher status in EU decision-making. These unsuccessful attempts to reinforce the role of regions on the European arena are, by no means, the evidence of low importance of regional level. On the contrary, regions are the core element of state and supra-state bodies function. They matter in the EU for good functional and democratic reasons. The discourse on their role brought to the dispute on its future and reforms needed to provide effective platform for its further function. However, it has nothing to do with a rather utopian vision of “Europe of Regions”, which puts aside the member states as the building blocks of European Union. On the contrary, it has much to do with the role that the regions play in European decision-making as a crucial element of member states.

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**REGION**  
*and*  
**REGIONALISM**  
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## **THE RE-EMERGENCE OF HISTORICAL REGIONS, CITIES AND ENCLAVES IN EUROPE VS. THE EU'S INTEGRATION CONCEPTS, PROCESSES AND REALITY**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Both in the EU and in the Eastern Europe, it seems the historical regions are presently living a kind of resurgence. Europe, so we read with increasing frequency<sup>1</sup>, has always been and remains very much a continent of regional historical identities (Sallnow and Arlett, 1989, p. 9). In addition to the well known effects of globalization<sup>2</sup>, EU-policies also contribute to the revival of the historical regions and the notion of regionalism has insinuated itself into a wide range of debates on the future of Europe.

Regionalization and re-ethnicization can be observed worldwide (Keating, 1998; Smouts, 1998) and the recent relative success of regional identity politics relates back to the persistence of mythical traditions and narratives on historical regions. There is an evident process of re-regionalization which refers to a growing force of federalist and particularistic traditions, but it also refers more broadly to the ways that regional political cultures are both strengthened and transformed in unexpected ways. The “genuine nation” (or nationality) has made reappearance on the world stage, even if regions

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<sup>1</sup> Beginning from 1992, when Tom Nairn wrote in the *New Statesman* that regions had become a “key part” of the discussion about European Union (Nairn, 1992, p. 30).

<sup>2</sup> But, far from being a product of the post-Communist, post-Maastricht Treaty era in European affairs, this attention to a resurgent or a renewed or a reinvented or a re-discovered regionalism in fact stretches back through several decades of Euro-debates. See, for example, R.S. Elkar, ed. (1981, p. 10); H. Mommsen (1984, p. 35).

should be not understood only as a “would-be nations”. There is a cognitive regional identity, which as a rule displays an emotional dimension and at the same time an instrumental character (Keating, 1998), and which owing to these two elements, also constitutes a space of political action. In fact, the historical region became an important tool of current identity politics. A “nation” is a complex of subjective feelings based on a certain number of objective realities, which centralized states with varying degree of success have been incorporated, in forging among their subject nationalities, in a wide “sense of national unity”. In Great Britain, the English have never truly eradicated national aspirations among the submerged Celtic nationalities, the Scots and the Welsh, although Cornish nationalism seems to have been mostly stamped out. In Spain, the conquering Castilians, based in Madrid, have never managed to erase nationalism among the Catalans, the Basques or the Galicians or Andalusians. Even in France, after eleven centuries of intensive political unification, the French have never totally tamed the Bretons, the Basques, or the people of the Languedoc. The “nation”, especially if it is a “macro-structure”, cannot be precisely defined. The question of nationality is made more complex by the interplay of objectively existing reality and subjective perceptions. The high degree of a regional sense of belonging and of regional feelings at the local level shows the importance of the historical regions, despite the well known differences in the political status of regions across Europe within the diverging frameworks of more federal or more centralized state organizations<sup>3</sup>.

The main problem for EU’s integration includes the appearance of regional pressures and historical identities that are not only skeptical of European integration but that have also called for new varieties of smaller political arrangements. Can the regional forces, that take account of the growing demand for political cultural, and economic sovereignty, be the basis of a new Europe, based on increasingly smaller self-governmental units more similar to the basis of the historical Europe? Actually, there is no reason to believe that the spatial borders of Westphalian sovereignty are drawn once and for all. These boundaries have been acquired by force, or by interstate agreement above and beyond the heads of inhabitants on the spot,

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<sup>3</sup> Even in a “regional” state, the difference of protection of the historical heritage in a certain region may be very different: for example, even if the re-emergence of the historical region of Ladins in Northern Italy has an overall effect, the difference of political status between a “special statute region” (Südtirol) and an “ordinary statute region” (Veneto, Lombardy or Piedmont) is enormous.

and invariably these boundaries shift a great deal over time, in ways that make proclamations of “territorial integrity” unrealistic. But the reservoir of identity politics, containing symbols and memories, is ambiguous enough to potentially stay open both, for the possibility of an extended integration *and* for disintegration tendencies.

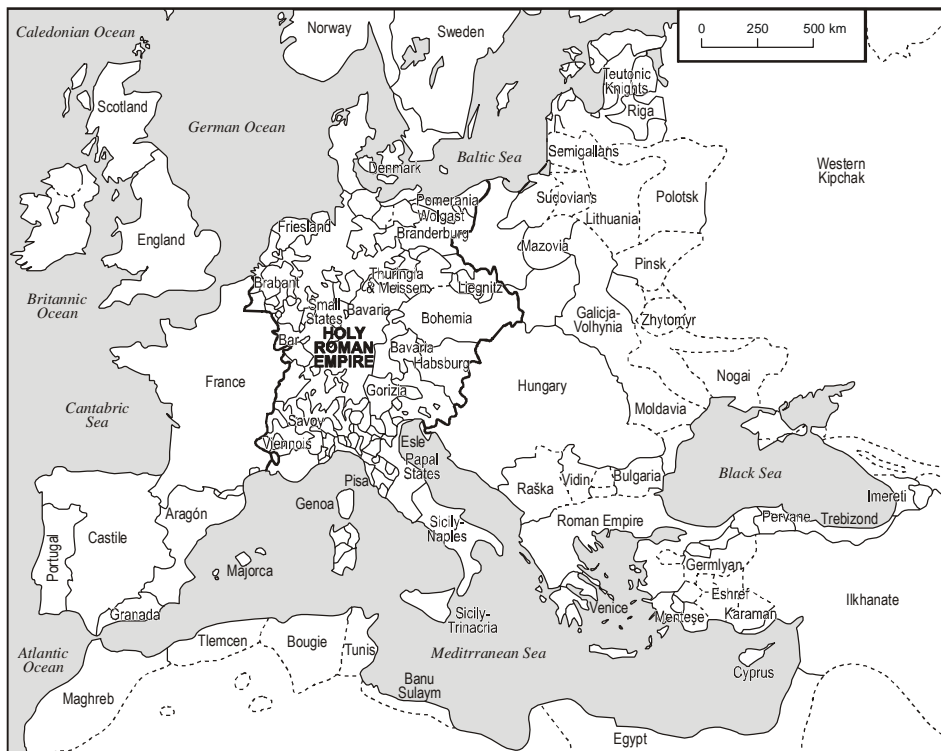


Fig. 1. Europe in the XIV century  
Source: author's own elaboration

In fact, the EU's concept of political integration, based on a rigorous system of inclusion and exclusion defined by full membership status and fortified external borders, is largely incompatible with the re-emergence of a self-rule system of historical regions, with the contemporary transborder spontaneous cooperation and with the multiplication of different ties among cities and enclaves, inside or outside its territorial domain.

## 2. THE RE-EMERGENCE OF HISTORICAL REGIONS, CITIES AND ENCLAVES IN EUROPE

All reports and studies agreed on identifying the region and its history as an important tool of current identity politics. In Europe, the historical regions are presently living a kind of resurgence, implying a deep crisis of “artificial regions” projected and planned by a sovereign authority during the processes of unification, mostly for statistical, fiscal and other reasons inside the nation states (as regarding the paradigmatic case of Italy) and of “nationalized regions”, which exclude the increasing relevance of “trans-border regions”. The high degree of convergence in the construction of a regional sense of belonging is quite evident and threatens in many cases the relation of fidelity (political obligation) inside the states, in order to build an alternative one. It is not only looking at regions as sub-national entities that their emancipation comprises. Regions can also be supranational formations, in evident “concurrence” with EU’s political structures.

Historical regions are mostly ethnic and cultural units (and not only homogeneous economic or geographical ones or simply political subdivisions of nation states), generally seen as “close to people”, reflecting “cultural diversity” but the main problem is that they are not clearly defined. We lack even an adequate vocabulary; and what we cannot describe, we cannot explain. The same significance of regions in European history is difficult to define. The reason why it happens is that they still reflect the past reality of historical Europe, when territoriality was relatively fixed and the prevailing concept of territory did not need to entail mutual exclusion (Ruggie, 1993, p. 149). Historical regions born in medieval Europe, with its patchwork of overlapping and incomplete rights of very different forms of authorities (Strayer and Munro, 1959, p. 115; Strayer, 1970), which were inextricably superimposed and tangled, and in which different juridical instances were geographically interwoven and stratified, witnessed multiple allegiances, asymmetrical suzerainties and anomalous *enclaves* abounded (Ruggie, 1993, p. 150). Before the nation state structure was dominative, there was prevailing, nonexclusive form of territoriality, with many forms of personalized and fragmented authorities within and across territorial formations, with inclusive bases of legitimation. The main change in the political structure of Europe was the creation and the spread of firm, territorial boundary lines between political formations. The most distinct feature of modernity in international politics came to be a particular form of territorially-disjoint,



fixed, and mutually exclusive – as the basis for organizing political life. Historical regions, mostly spontaneous, were forced to adopt these lines and a specific form of “spatial extension” of the states, strongly connected to an *inclusive* base of legitimation, mutual exclusion and to a gradual differentiation between internal and external, as “natural” and inevitable. In fact, this process was unique in human history (Sack, 1986). As a result, the model of nation state increasingly opposed the particularism articulated in language, culture, cults, lifestyles and customs that constitute people’s specific social texture and the basis for specific political institutions reflecting a local character. States were built around the idea of territorial homogeneity and unity.

As Hendrik Spruyt demonstrated, historical regions, the Hanse or Italian city-states were in fact viable political alternatives to the territorially defined, territorially fixed, and mutually exclusive states (Spruyt, 1994). But strong centralized administration and socially legitimate power (by its subjects) have completely transformed the political life of Western and Central Europe (Johnson and Percy, 1970, p. 56), even if, as Charles Tilly pointed out, the leaders of prior institutions and even ordinary people had fought the claims of central states for centuries, right into the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Tilly, 1975, p. 22). But territorial rulers recognized to be irreducibly “transterritorial” in character (as during the medieval period) of only few regional units, considering these formations as relicts. Moreover, socio-political entities of very long historical standing remain vital today without being contained in territorial states<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, within the EU the issue of different region’s individuality clearly becomes visible. Among them, historical regions form a vast majority (Sobczyński, 2009, p. 7). Historical regions were divided by state borders, which led to their internal spatial disintegration and their decomposition into new, artificial political-administrative units. This, however, did not influence their cultural cohesion (Sobczyński, 2009, p. 1). At a certain point, indeed, the construction of the “macro-nation” no longer corresponds with reality. Authentic bonds are cultural, obtained at the micro, rather than the macro level. A sense of belonging, customs and everything that goes along with them, are part of the *micro-level*. Because they are vital and enduring, today historical roots break out, endangering nationalism at the macro-level. Society has satisfied the basic needs of a decisive proportion of

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<sup>4</sup> The *Arab Nation* into the Arabic States is a case in this point. See Albert Hourani A. (1991). The same is for historical, ethnic regions and sub regional units all around the world.

the population, which is no longer willing to overlook its microcultural needs. The satisfaction of basic needs brings into being other particularistic aspirations. There is, for example, a thrust toward salvaging elements of original cultures, such as one's rural roots, which assumes an extraordinary significance (Miglio, 1993, p. 34). Today's administrative regions do not correspond with historical regions. Nowadays, no map can capture the sense of the re-emergence of these regions. They form a new informal texture of potentially unbundled territoriality, which is the place wherein a re-articulation of international political space would be occurring today (Ruggie, 1993, p. 171). Within the new European environment and outside the EU (e.g. transborder regions in Eastern Europe) there is an ample potential for broad relations between historical regions – relations often easier to develop than those between nation states<sup>5</sup>. In a possible map of a regionally organized Europe there are nowadays many networks of megalopolis which collaborate and work together, trying to establish new administrative units regardless of the state. The North of the Ruhr is a big historical region independent of the rest of the *Länder*; metropolitan centres are once again becoming what they were in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Randstad Holland is a collection of increasingly polycentric urban regions with an evident regional capacity to develop itself into a functionally coherent and internationally competitive metropolitan area and these processes strengthen its internal cohesion (Musterd and Zelm, 2001). This is also the case of the cities in Northern Italy. The texture of tomorrow's Europe probably will be made up of great regions and megalopolitan areas (in Gottmann's original definition of the term, with a sharper vision than that of contemporary geopoliticians) (Gottmann, 1961; Miglio, 1993, p. 28).

The reality of enclaves in Europe is also developing. The world history provides hundreds of cases of enclaves. Actually, million of people live in *de jure* or simply in *de facto* enclaves (subnational, which are not visible as the "international" ones) throughout the world. Despite the fact that they were something normal in the historical Europe (first wave of enclaves was connected to the specificities of pre-Westphalian state building in Europe in the Middle Ages)<sup>6</sup>, enclaves are often viewed as anomalous objects of the

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<sup>5</sup> The German Ambassador in Rome, at the beginning of 1990s acknowledged this when he stated: "I am Bavarian and there is more affinity in my relations with Lombardy than with Hamburg".

<sup>6</sup> The enclaves were a much less significant feature in Eastern Europe because of the lesser significance of feudalism.

world's political geography, as something peculiar, a curiosity in the world of geography and international relations. The authors, who write about enclaves, characterize the situation of these formations as "anomalous". Enclaves are not geographical curiosities but specific geographical and political objects, connected with historical regions. Pierre Raton wrote in 1958: "Enclaves, the archaic remnants, are in the course of disappearance" (Raton, 1958, p. 193). More than fifty years later we find that he was wrong. In fact, the number of enclaves having come into existence in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century outweighs the number of those that have ceased to exist. Many enclaves proved to be extremely resilient, even in the face of war, changing borders, or economic systems. New enclaves, including quite large ones, were mushrooming in the 1990s, which was marked by a new wave coming into existence.

The process of building of a new enclave is connected to the destruction of arbitrary border settlement, realized without taking into account the interests of population and without taking into consideration any historical and traditional patterns of economic and political ties. The wave of break-ups of the socialist states, in particular of the Soviet Union and in the Balkans, brought into existence more than fifty enclaves in Europe and Asia. But also in Western Europe there are many existing and recognized or only "potential" enclaves. For example there is Baarle enclave complex, with 22 Belgian enclaves in the Netherlands and eight Dutch counter-enclaves. The two nations inside this region co-exist very closely. Büsingen (in the Swiss canton of Schaffhausen), Campione, Gibraltar, Jungholz have clear roots in the feudal trans-territorial structure of Europe. Enclaves represent non-contiguous fragments of states: they have legal international status but may be an obstacle for the conception of the territorial contiguity of the modern State and even in the EU: the case of Kaliningrad (Królewiec/Königsberg/Karaliaučius) is emblematic. It is impossible to ignore the existence of subnational enclaves that can potentially be raised to the international level: the subnational borders are elevated onto the international level and cause international enclaves to emerge everywhere in Europe. Enclaves are created and raised to the top by the waves of great historical phenomena. Enclaves tend to emerge as an unexpected and unwanted result of international or domestic politics. The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the enclave issue rising on several occasions when state or subnational regions disintegrated or were threatening to fall apart. A multitude of enclaves was created during the expansion of the EU to the East. Especially Baltic States managed to "disenclave" small enclaves close to the borders (Pogiry in Belarus, Dubki, a small enclave in

Estonia and so on) with the land exchange which is only a method of eliminating an “anomaly” and not to solve it. Also the agreements on the land exchange might be drawn contrary to the public opinion and especially the wishes of the local population.

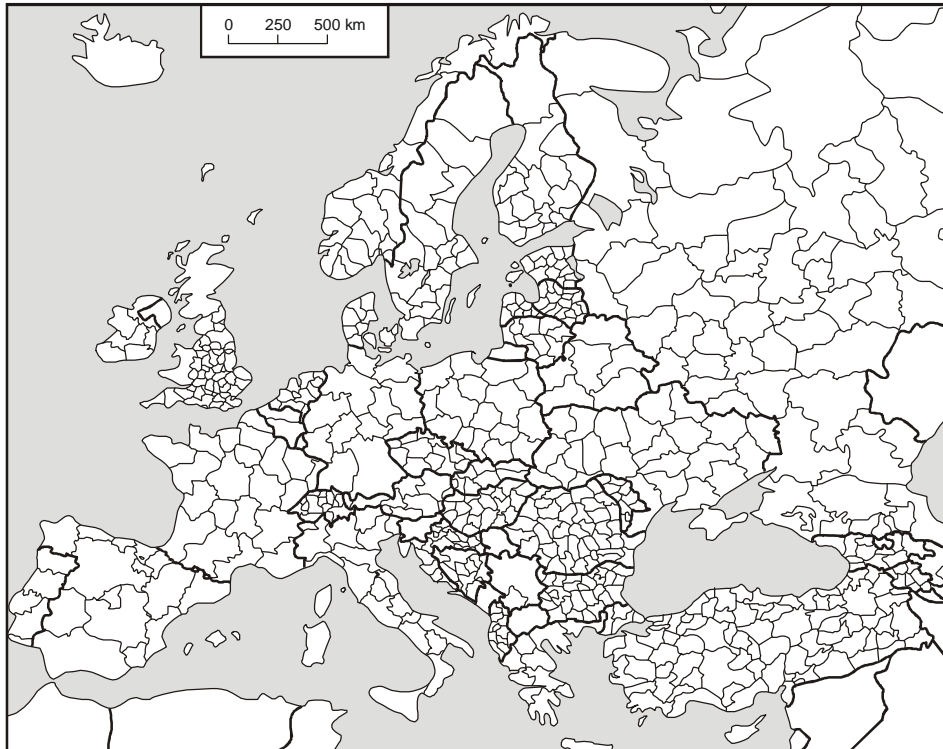


Fig. 2. Administrative contemporary regions in Europe  
Source: author's own elaboration

Enclaves are in fact at the same time an effective, unconventional mean of peaceful and democratic partitioning of a state: they are “non contiguous nations” (Smith, 1997). A deliberate “enclavization” can resolve national and other conflicts. The question is how deeply they may be connected to the re-emergence of historical regions. In fact, the national composition of the most of the currently existing enclaves coincides with the national composition of the mainland.

### 3. EU'S INTEGRATION CONCEPTS, PROCESSES AND REALITY

Inside and outside the EU the problem of historical regions, of cities and of enclaves is in clear contradiction with EU's policies. Europe consisting of a community (or rather a *trust*) of fully sovereign and independent states (*Europe of nations*) cannot resolve the problems of historical regions, cities and enclaves. The focus remains on maintaining cultural differences between states because nationality and culture are identified with citizenship and historical regions are identified with states. States decide about all their regions, whether historical or not. Historical regions are simply ignored and they cannot restore their tradition, taking responsibility over many aspects of local economic, social and political life. European neofunctionalism is without any doubt against the re-emergence of historical regions (Mathias, 2003). Analyzing the relationship between the resurgence of the historical region and the regional policy of the EU, we can observe that neither the nation-state nor the supranational level appear to be willing to hand over real decision-making power to the region. The so-called "third level" of multiple governance has remained an illusion. Instead of getting actively involved into decision processes, the region apparently has become more an object than a subject in EU politics. Despite the mobilizing effect of EU politics and EU rhetoric which remains strong, the regional disillusionment is widespread.

Because of modern territorial prejudice (and *territorial trap*), within the borders of one state there is space just for one nation, even if the identity between cultural, nation state and territory identity is an artificial historical and recent invention and cultural and political borders do not follow at all the same lines of division. The states simply fears loss of power at the national level, centrifugal forces and the disintegration of unitary state's structures. The increase of importance of regions is viewed as a threat for national identity<sup>7</sup>. Historical regions quite frequently became the subjects of an active integration policy consisting in an elimination of their individuality and in an "uniformization" of their characteristics. Instead of stimulating a form of voluntary aggregation and federalization between different historical regions,

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<sup>7</sup> The devaluation of regions and their pasts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century emerged naturally alongside the triumph of the national historiographies. However, nowadays historians of highly centralized nations like France have also begun working towards a new interpretation of the place of regional diversity in national history.

the main tendency is to impede their re-emergence and to fragment their non-territorial configuration. This kind of reaction, evident or hidden, especially expressed using European legislation and different kind of “pseudo-federalization” (cosmetic autonomies, regionalization, hierarchical subsidiarity, transferring of formal competences with strong control of funds – at any time in power to withdraw them – administrative control, the multiplication of local authorities, and “decentralization”), stimulates the re-emergence of historical regions in many forms, despite their effective capabilities, nowadays still very weak, in economic and political terms even if people believe they will deal with their everyday’s socioeconomic problems better than the central government.

EU is based on an old concept of contiguous territories, of rigid territorial integrity and it cannot admit the reality of historical regions, federations or networks of cities, or enclaves as self-rule entities. The reaction to the same reality of the enclave of Kaliningrad and the claim for a spatial contiguity inside the EU remains emblematic. Outside EU, the influence on the reconstruction of national states, especially in the Balkans is evident. The EU integration policy disintegrates historical regions<sup>8</sup>. The EU’s integration policy does not consider the reality of historical non-nation regions. The project of reinforcement of internal cohesion of the EU, typical of an obsessive conception of political unity, reflects the logic of the modern state: the production of order into the borders and the expulsion of the disorder outside. This conception is based also on “territorial obsessions” as demonstrates the discussion about the necessity of “territorial continuity”: it is impossible to admit exceptions, e.g. *enclaves* and the territory of EU must be continuous, without any interruptions. The same process of enlargement was thought as an acquisition of contiguous territories, excluding “anomalies”. This concept completely reveals the imitation of the political model of the modern territorial state, even though at “supra-state” level, where a barrier exists rather than “stepping stones” to authentic globalization (Anderson and O’Dowd, 1999, p. 600). Cross-border regions (with a high degree of convergence in the cross-border economic relationships, social and political problems) have grown in number and importance in Europe, but

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<sup>8</sup> The Dayton Agreement (21<sup>st</sup> November, 1995) divided e.g. historical regions of Bosnia according to homogenization criteria and despite previous historical problems and legitimating ethnic cleansing and historically state presumptions of closed territorial units, by the creation of three separate states based on the ethnic groups moved after massacres, formally united by a “federal Constitution”.

they may have a cultural, economic unity incongruent with state or EU borders or even the border may divide them. The drawing of any given state or of “supra-national” border represents a simplification of complex political and geographical problems.

Today’s conformation of “Eurocomunitarian” borders<sup>9</sup> is an obstacle for the cross-border mobility and spontaneous processes of integration between regions and neighbouring countries; it oversimplifies and distorts social realities on the border. Even though the EU is based on rhetorical arguments on the opening of borders and of “borderless Europe”, as a prevailing of exaltation of benefits of European free trade, it remains closed into barriers that were recently reinforced and justified with contradictory arguments.

Even in Western Europe and not only in Central and Eastern Europe, as for a long time, as the object of integrationist policies, which comprise political, economic and social elements, historical minorities are often under threat, both officially-sanctioned and otherwise. Regional identity is generally under attack and it is really hard to maintain it when the real policy is aimed at an attempt to undermine it as much as possible. The overall long-time decline of ethnic language or cultural education is often compounded by campaigns of nationalistic “patriotic education”, instituted in primary and secondary schools and it is often planned to erase historical, regional feelings. Patriotism must be identified with unique devotion to a nation-state or, possibly, to EU. But it is an evident underestimation of the huge potential of “dormant identities” (Keating, 1998, p. 87) and the integrative or dis-integrative effects of the regions cannot be foreseen.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The days of isolation are over. This new era requires the greatest possible participation of every human being for the viable, sustainable and just development sought by all humanity. While each country must establish its own strategies for growth and development, none can fail to realize that shared future prosperity can only be assured through the broadest international cooperation. The free flow of commerce, investment, science and technology, amongst other things, must evolve within the context of assuring truly equitable competition – in an international system free from

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<sup>9</sup> About the permanence of this border, see also Newman and Paasi (1998, p. 199) and Andreas (2003).

barriers or obstacles to meeting and exchange – so that the benefits of economic growth reach everyone. In the “non-territorial” global economic region, the conventional distinctions between “internal” and “external” dimensions are problematic.

Regions could successfully be identified with people conscious of their identity. But historical and ethnic reasons cannot become a compulsory instrument redrawing European regions. Differences between regional identities must be connected to the will of the people and they must depend on their voluntarily accepted characteristics. Frequently, state borders create much more distinctiveness than regional difference, especially in neighbouring regions. National identity had created dangerous tensions in history. The coexistence of cultures stimulates intercultural ties and prevents closed cultural borders (Mostov, 2008). As we can see while studying European history, nation states, using their integration and citizenship policy (and nowadays these policies are the same inside the EU), have the tendency to limit the cultural diversity and the minority rights. The model of the unitary state (which is the most coherent model of the modern state) is quite incompatible with the multicultural (multiethnic) reality. The essence of the state can be traced to its pursuit of internal homogeneity. In order to reach this goal the modern state hypostatized the idea of nation which remains rather fictitious, and used it as a political myth, able to guarantee cohesion.

In the past and for a long time the situation was quite different. It is necessary to look to the age preceding modernity, not by assuming it will resurface as it was, but in order to envisage new possibilities. In the past there was a variety of political subjects different in form, substance and objectives: the Empire, the Church, small sovereignties. Today, it is necessary to assume a dynamic approach towards relations between political subjects, to consider them transitory and tied to a limited temporality, both in international relations and in the constitutions meant to regulate community life (Miglio, 1993, p. 39).

EU, at the same time, stimulates and hinders the re-emergence of historical ties. Probably this contradiction will explode. The spontaneous reconfiguration of Europe comprising different units beyond exclusive ethnic criteria (if the self-government principle becomes the most important) could rediscover historical and transborder regions along the main material interests and tendencies to cooperate. It will be possible to rediscover the role of historical regions, cities and enclaves, where relations based on common interest replace territorial borders and ties to entities outside spatial contiguity, establishing the hierarchic order of problems to be solved on the



basis of their importance by peoples involved, which keep strong ties even if they are in different areas far from each other, limiting collaboration to specific objectives. If there is a sharp division along national, religious or linguistic lines, the peaceful partition might be possible by creating enclaves based on the will of the population. Even if on the international level the democratic principle is only a shadow, rarely remembered, in these cases the democratic basis is essential for the success. “Enclavization” can be a flexible mean for peaceful reorganization of the international life. The hierarchical conception of territorial power cannot assure the right to associate and the problem solving in the new Millennium. The theological, secularized dogma of the immutability of the state, of the sacredness of borders, could be accepted when socio-economic factors changed slowly, but certainly not in our age. The old centralizing nation-states have lost their “holiness” and older and deeper ties among people are again making their claims heard. Thus, disjoint, mutually exclusive, and fixed territoriality can powerfully transform both the European space and the polity.

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**CHARISMATIC PERSONALITIES OF MIXED  
ETHNO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND AND THEIR  
ROLE IN NATIONAL MOVEMENTS  
IN CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPE**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

When studying national movements, or even more generally – political movements, in Central-Eastern Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, one finds a very important, maybe decisive, role of personalities that can be considered as coming from mixed ethno-cultural background. A more detailed scrutiny of their lives and activities reveals that their road to the position of leader of a given national movement was not straight and smooth and their political and national choices (choices of belonging to a given nation) were determined by many factors, quite often accidental. The role of accident is especially visible in the case of families, whose members at times of choosing national belonging, opted for two or even for three conflicting nationalities.

Among political activists (of mixed ethnic background or not) in the 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century Europe, and elsewhere, there are some political leaders that can be called “charismatic personalities”. It is interesting to learn, who those personalities were – what were their social and personal characteristics, and when they became charismatic, as nobody was born as a charismatic personality. An analysis of biographies of “charismatic personalities” in Central-Eastern Europe in political movements reveals some common features: they all were male, strong, individualistic personalities, their social background depended on socio-political system of country concerned: in more democratic systems (like in the Habsburg monarchy since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century) the social basis of political leaders was relatively broad (including peasantry), in

less democratic systems (like in the Russian Empire) political leaders (including revolutionaries) were recruited almost exclusively from aristocracy or frustrated impoverished gentry. As to the second question: when did they become charismatic leaders? – it seems that it were the political turning points – revolutions (e.g. in 1905 and 1917 in Russia) and wars (first of all, World War I), that created opportunities for strong and active personalities to become “charismatic”. It is interesting to note how second-rate political activists, for decades present in political scenes of respective countries, suddenly became “fathers of nations” or “founders of states”.

The aim of this paper is to present biographies of leaders of national movements in Central-Eastern Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which were both of mixed ethnic background and charismatic, placing the analysis in the broader socio-political context of that part of Europe. First, it defines the very notion of “ethnically mixed background”, then it describes Central-Eastern Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (focusing on factors determining national movements), finally it analyzes three main biographies: of Józef Piłsudski (Polish national leader), Tomáš G. Masaryk (Czech leader) and Andrei Sheptytskyi (or Roman Szeptycki) (Ukrainian leader). Additionally, the paper mentions some people of mixed ethnic background who, although not always being outstanding charismatic leaders, illustrate complicated matter of choice of national belonging. These are cases of J.H. Dąbrowski (German-speaking Polish national hero), W. Kętrzyński (who was born as German A. Winkler and became a famous Polish patriot W. Kętrzyński), Szeptycki brothers (choosing different national identities: Polish or Ukrainian), Iwanowski brothers (Polish, Lithuanian, Byelorussian) and Dzierżyński brothers (internationalist, Polish).

## **2. MIXED ETHNO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CHOICES**

In this paper, the people of mixed ethno-cultural background are considered to be people, who grew up having daily contacts with people of different (at least two) ethno-cultural groups (speaking different languages as their mother tongues, confessing different religions or rites or belonging to different ethnic groups) and these contacts influenced political opinions of such persons. The simplest kind of a mixed ethno-cultural background comprises ethnically mixed families, where parents came from different ethnic groups. A little less obvious is another kind of mixed ethno-cultural

background, namely a mixed local milieu (village or town). It is assumed, that the very awareness of existence of various cultures, languages or religions influences people's political thinking. Yet another kind of persons of mixed ethno-cultural background is represented by people, who are aware that their ancestors belonged to an ethnic group, which is different from the one they belong to.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the time of growing national sentiments and emerging mass political movements (e.g. socialism), inhabitants of Central-Eastern Europe were under increasing pressure to declare their national (ethnic) belonging and to act in accordance with it. For persons from homogeneous ethno-cultural background the only choice was between engagement in a respective national movement and in a socially oriented ideology, or in a combination of both. The choice faced by people of mixed background was much more complicated. Several attitudes can be distinguished. 1) deliberate and decisive option for one national group, confirmed by active engagement in defending interests of this group (presumably to convince others and themselves of belonging to this very group), 2) indecisive and hesitant national identity, changes in national options, 3) attempts at forming (or retaining) a broader identity combining constituent smaller identities, 4) avoiding choosing national identity by engaging in universalistic identities (political or religious). Choices were often unconscious and accidental: depending on events seen and involved in accidentally, jobs offered, people met, etc. The aforementioned cases of family members choosing and engaging in different national movements confirm the role of accident.

It should be noted that objective ethnic characteristics of a person, such as language or religion, were not always decisive in choosing one's national identity: language spoken in the family and learned as mother tongue by a person could be considered as "foreign", "imposed" by oppressors or by disadvantageous circumstances and thus this person should "return" to his/her "true" own language. To a lesser extent, this is also true for religions and rites. Consequently, the choice of language (to be learned and used) and religion was quite often secondary to the choice of national belonging.

### **3. CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPE IN THE 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY – HISTORY, NATIONS AND STATES**

The aim of this chapter is not to present an extensive description of history, ethnic composition or state boundaries in Central-Eastern Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The aim is to outline some elements, determining national movements and national choices of peoples living in this area.

In this paper the notion “Central-Eastern Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century” entails the Habsburg (Austrian) Empire, western parts of the Russian Empire and eastern parts of the then Germany (Prussia). State boundaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in this area were determined at the Vienna Congress in 1815. They were relatively new and not accepted by a considerable part of the politically active population there. Many relevant characteristics of this area, such as ethnic composition, language situation, social stratification, political loyalties and identifications, etc. had been influenced by previous states that ceased existing or lost independence earlier. Two states are of special importance for our study: the Commonwealth of the Two Nations (union of the Crown of Poland and the Great Duchy of Lithuania) and the Kingdom of Bohemia. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the former territory of the Commonwealth was divided between the three empires in the area, and the Kingdom of Bohemia (deprived of independence) entirely belonged to the Austrian Empire.

Poland (in times of the Commonwealth called “Crown of Poland” or the “Crown” to distinguish it from the “Great Duchy”), as a state, emerged in the mid-tenth century on the territory roughly similar to the present territory of Poland. Until the late 14<sup>th</sup> century it occupied the same territory – this was ethnically, religiously (overwhelming majority of western Christians or Catholics, beside Jewish population) and linguistically (predominantly western Slavonic dialects with negligible differences between them, a well developed unified language used by the gentry and royal courts) quite homogeneous. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century territory of Poland moved south-eastwards: Poland lost northern and western provinces and gained territories of present western Ukraine (Galicia). This new territory was populated by a slightly different population: Ruthenians speaking eastern Slavonic dialects (similar to western Slavonic ones but easily distinguishable) and confessing eastern (Orthodox) Christianity. Gentry (aristocracy) of the new territory easily adopted culture and language of the gentry of the old territory (influencing it to some extent) and some of them also converted to Catholicism. At the same time, Ruthenian peasantry remained Orthodox and continued to speak its

dialects, although highly penetrated by the Polish. It is worth mentioning, that the gentry played a special role in the political system of the Polish Kingdom, e.g. they elected the king and had a say in political matters (which eventually led to political weakness and collapse of Poland by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century). Engagement of the gentry in the state matters of Poland, unlike any other social group, made them “Polish nation” or *natio Polonica*. In such a way “Polish” was identified with “noble” or “gentry” and vice versa. Therefore, Poles-nobles differed from the rest of the population by their political status, group identity, economic situation, customs, language and, in Ruthenian provinces, often by religion. These provinces were also settled by peasants from “old” Polish territory forming islands within the Ruthenian population. The main obstacle for the entire integration of the two groups of peasantry was religion.

Since the late 14<sup>th</sup> century Poland was in personal union and since mid-16<sup>th</sup> century in real union with the Great Duchy of Lithuania, thus forming the Commonwealth of the Two Nations. Lithuanian state was created by Baltic (non-Slavic) pagan tribes in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The ruling aristocracy quickly got assimilated linguistically by eastern Slavs (Ruthenians) so that later on they were considered as being Ruthenians, and Lithuania as a Ruthenian country. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century Lithuania expanded rapidly by including vast territory of Ruthenian lands (present day territories of Lithuania, Byelorussia and central Ukraine with Kiev; Ukraine with Kiev was later conceded to Poland after the union). By the end of this century, Lithuanian rulers adopted Christianity (Catholicism) from Poland and one of them was offered Polish crown. Many Lithuanians adopted Orthodox Christianity, thus fully assimilating religiously and linguistically to the numerically dominant Ruthenian-Orthodox population. Since the union with Poland, Polish cultural and linguistic influence in the Great Duchy intensified, strengthened by Polish migration in the area of Vilnius. Lithuanian gentry, part of which (as mentioned earlier) of Baltic origin, adopted the language and customs of Polish gentry. Usually they combined their “Lithuanian” identity (loyalty to the Great Duchy) with their “Polish” identity (loyalty to the Commonwealth). Some aristocrats of the Great Duchy, who had previously confessed Orthodox religion, adopted Catholic religion. Peasant Ruthenian population remained overwhelmingly Orthodox.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century there was an initiative to unite the two Christian Churches in the Commonwealth. The idea was to preserve some ritual elements and organizational autonomy of the Orthodox Church while making it part of the Catholic Church (dependent on Vatican). This action was only

partly successful (otherwise it provoked resistance and civil wars, which weakened the Commonwealth in the 17<sup>th</sup> century), but it did create a Uniate (or Greek Catholic) Church, which would play a significant role in the Ukrainian national movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Orthodox Church invariably treated the Uniate Church as betrayers and as the result of plot between Poland and Vatican.

By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, because of its political weakness, the Commonwealth was occupied by three neighbouring powers, led by Russia (the other two were Prussia and Austria) and its territory was divided between them. This division was corrected in favour of Russia at the Vienna Congress. The former territory of the Crown of Poland was divided by the three occupiers, while the territory of the Great Duchy belonged entirely to Russia. One of the moves of Russian authorities was to liquidate the Uniate Church – their members had to join either the Orthodox or the Roman Catholic Church. In such a way, the Uniate Church practically disappeared in the Russian Empire, but remained in the Austria-occupied Galicia.

A considerable part (if not the vast majority) of the gentry of the former Commonwealth (usually named as “Poland”) considered the liquidation of it as something unnatural and harmful, giving rise to the Polish national movement, which took several forms. In the Austrian part, taking advantage of the political weakness and democratization of the Habsburg Empire, Polish national movement managed to transform this part of former Poland into an autonomous region (1867) and to take political control of it.

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century on the former territory of the Commonwealth national movements intensified and, apart from the Polish option, new national options emerged – partially as opposition to the Polish national movement, partially as a result of inspiration by the Polish national movement. These new national options were Ukrainian in Galicia, and Byelorussian and Lithuanian on the former territory of the Great Duchy. There was also a strong Jewish national movement – Zionism – also inspired and influenced by the Polish national movement, but it is not dealt with in this paper. The three new movements largely appealed to the peasant population and their anti-Polish character combined ethnic and social elements. Polish national movement aimed, to a large extent, at restoring the Commonwealth identified with Poland and made reference to the already established Polish language and literature and culture strongly linked to Roman Catholicism (as a matter of fact, in the past, Protestants also contributed to creation of the Polish language and culture, but after the counterreformation and after the partitioning of Poland, they usually



identified themselves and were identified with other nationalities). Ukrainian movement appealed to anti-Polish, anti-gentry, anti-Roman Catholic sentiments of Galician Orthodox or Greek Catholic Ruthenian peasantry. Modern Lithuanian nationalism tried to restore the Great Duchy of Lithuania by making reference to its founders (first of all, to its greatest ruler Vytautas the Great). It was popular among Baltic dialects-speaking peasantry, but it also attracted a lot of Polish-speaking gentry, considering themselves as “Polonized Lithuanians”, who felt being obliged to return to their original ethnicity and language. Byelorussian national movement, the weakest one, also made reference to the Great Duchy presenting it as a Byelorussian state (and to Vytautas the Great as a Byelorussian hero). This movement was addressed primarily to Orthodox Ruthenian peasantry of the former Great Duchy, although there were many Polish speaking Catholic and Protestant noblemen among the activists of this movement.

One of the concerns of national movements was language. For the Polish national movement the aim was to preserve its unity in the three states and to defend its status, while for the Ukrainian, Lithuanian and Byelorussian movements the primary concern was to create national standard language and to gain social acceptance for it.

From the territorial point of view, a complicated situation was in and around Lvov (capital city of Galicia), which was a centre of the Polish and of the Ukrainian movement, and even more so in the area of Vilnius (capital city of the Great Duchy)<sup>1</sup>, where Polish, Lithuanian, Byelorussian and Jewish national movements were very active (the former three appealed roughly to the same population), apart from representatives of the Russian Empire.

National movements were not the only political movements on the former territory of the Commonwealth in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. There were also revolutionary (socialist), peasant, and liberal-democratic and anti-tsarist (in the Russian empire) ideas fighting for people’s hearts and minds. Some movements combined national and social components.

Considerably different from the above picture of the former Poland (Commonwealth) was the situation of the Kingdom of Bohemia in the Austrian Empire. The Bohemian state was established by western Slavic tribes in the 9<sup>th</sup> century on the territory similar to the present territory of the Czech Republic. Its prime time was in the 13<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries, when it exerted political and cultural influence on neighbouring countries. Of special

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<sup>1</sup> For a short presentation of the history of this city see: *War and peace among icons...*

importance for future Czech national movement was the Czech language and literature which in this period achieved high level of development. From the very beginning the Bohemian state was in close political, economic and cultural relations with German lands, otherwise being member of the Holy Roman Empire dominated by Germans. German settlers used to settle down in the Kingdom of Bohemia as farmers, handicraftsmen and later on also as members of royal court and rulers themselves.

German presence and influence intensified after 1523 when Habsburg dynasty took over the Bohemian throne. The real loss of independence was in 1620 when the Bohemians were defeated at Bila Hora by Habsburgs and Czech noblemen were killed in the battle or migrated. This battle was also a blow for the Czech culture and language as creators and consumers of Czech language and culture disappeared. This event accelerated process of linguistic and cultural Germanization of the Czech population. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century German language dominated in towns and cities and among gentry, bourgeoisie and educated people. Czech language – in many still more and more diverging dialects – was spoken only by peasants. It is estimated that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century 2/5 spoke German and 3/5 spoke Czech as their mother tongue and Czech-German bilingualism was widespread. It should be underlined that among Czech-German bilinguals and even among German native speakers many considered themselves as ethnic Czechs.

The Czech national movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had three kinds of objectives: linguistic (creation or restoration of the Czech standard language and upgrading its status), socio-economic (advancement of the Czech population, especially in commerce and industry in competition with the German population) and political (autonomy for the former Kingdom of Bohemia, especially after transforming of the Habsburg Empire into double Austrian-Hungarian monarchy). Czech national movement was a part of a broader Pan-Slavonic (or Austro-Slavonic) movement of Austria-Hungary. The relations between Czechs and Slovaks from Hungary were particularly close. Unlike Polish national movement, Czech national movement, until the outbreak of the world war, did not raise state independence as its objective.

One of important achievements of the Czech national movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the establishment of the Prague University, where Czech became the official language (in fact the existing German language-dominated university was split into two linguistic parts).

#### **4. THREE BIOGRAPHIES: J. PIŁSUDSKI, A. (R.) SZEPTYCKI, T. MASARYK, AND OTHERS**

##### **4.1. Józef Piłsudski (1867–1935)**

He was born in 1867<sup>2</sup>, into a rich gentry family (which later lost almost all its property and became rather poor when he was a child) in a village nearby Vilnius (present Lithuania). At home, his family spoke Polish “with strong Lithuanian accent” (as Piłsudski himself described his way of speaking). It should be noted, that Józef’s father once was owner of a big property nearby Kaunas (present central Lithuania) and lost it as a consequence of tsarist repressions for his participation in the 1863 anti-Russian uprising shortly before Józef’s birth (the property nearby Vilnius, which was not confiscated, belonged to Józef’s mother). The fact that Józef Piłsudski’s father came from the area of Kaunas is worth mentioning, because it was the area where Lithuanian (Baltic) language was still spoken (by peasantry) and where gentry was of local origin and defined themselves as “Lithuanian”. Otherwise, since 1870s it was the stronghold of modern Lithuanian nationalism based on Lithuanian language and specific interpretation of the history of the Great Duchy, with strong anti-Polish sentiments. Many representatives of the gentry in this area joined this movement.

Regarding their ethnic/national identity, the Piłsudski family identified themselves as “Lithuanian” and “Polish” at the same time, with “Polish” meaning “belonging to the ancient Commonwealth” and “Lithuanian” meaning “belonging to the ancient Great Duchy of Lithuania as a part of the Commonwealth”. In the area of Vilnius and in Vilnius itself, where the Piłsudski family moved after losing their land property, at least five ethnic groups were present: Polish, Lithuanian (in the present meaning of the word, it is Baltic Lithuanian), Byelorussian, Jewish and Russian plus many Germans and French. Besides, there were several religious groups: apart from numerous communities of Catholics, Orthodox and Jews there were Protestants, Muslims (Tatars) and Karaims. Piłsudski was Catholic, but to marry his future wife he turned to Protestantism, and later on, in 1916 (after separation) returned to Catholicism. Józef attended Russian-language secondary school in Vilnius (Polish-language schools had been shut down, and speaking Polish in schools was banned by Russian authorities in order to

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<sup>2</sup> There are a lot of biographies of Piłsudski. Among the most recent and see that by W. Kalicki (2009) on which this paper partially based.

crack down Polish national movement). After graduating from the secondary school, one year later Józef studied medicine at a university in Kharkov (present day Kharkiv in eastern Ukraine), planned to study in Dorpat (today Tartu in Estonia) and finally returned to Vilnius. As can be seen, he was familiar with Russian language and culture, but the contact with Russians strengthened his anti-Russian sentiments rather than created a kind of pro-imperial loyalty. Neither did it create willingness to participate in the Russian political life. Józef Piłsudski's older brother's, Bronisław's, attitude Russians and Russia was slightly different. Bronisław cooperated with a group of Russian revolutionaries, among them was Alexander Ulianov, older brother of Vladimir Ulianov, better known as "Lenin", in a failed attempt on tsar Alexander III's life (during the plot Ulianov lived in Piłsudski's house in Vilnius). As a punishment for this plot, Bronisław Piłsudski was sent for 15 years to Russian Far East (where he became famous for his ethnographic study of Ainu people) and Alexander Ulianov was executed (many years later, after the Bolshevik revolution, Vladimir Ulianov would have bloody revenge on Russian tsar and his family). Józef Piłsudski, although not engaged in the plot, was sent for 5 years to eastern Siberia. He was 19 years old at that time. These years in exile made him even more hostile towards the Russian Empire and the tsarist regime.

Upon return to Vilnius, he started his underground political activity in the Polish Socialist Party, a party which combined the idea of independent Poland with the idea of socialism (social democracy). Among other things, he wrote articles, edited and distributed illegal newspaper "Robotnik" (Polish word for "worker") and what was even more important, he organized and headed a "fighting group" of the party, an armed section of the party which protected anti-tsarist manifestations from attacks of the police with guns, and attacked Russian state institutions to rob money for political activity. Józef Piłsudski became famous in the underground movement during the revolution in Russia in 1905. In that time his party was split into two wings – one more socialist than Polish and the other, headed by Piłsudski, more Polish than socialist. Piłsudski, just like other Polish national activists in the Russian Empire, had a "safe haven" in Galicia – autonomous Austrian province dominated by Poles.

In Galicia, Piłsudski organized paramilitary (or military) groups called "legions" prepared to fight for independence of Poland. After the outbreak of the world war, legions took part in the fighting on the Austrian-German side against Russia. Personal qualities of Piłsudski as a military commander as well as victories of his troops, made him extremely popular among soldiers

and in the Polish public opinion in general. His popularity even grew, when in 1916 he resigned from the position of a commander of legions in protest against unwillingness of Austrians and Germans to recognize Poland's right for independence, and later when he (and his soldiers following him) refused to swear loyalty to Austria and Germany and was imprisoned by Germans in Magdeburg. He spent almost two years in imprisonment. In these years he grew to the position of a number one national hero in all Polish lands (in Russia, Austria and Germany).

On 10<sup>th</sup> November 1918, when the war was over and Germany was torn by socialist revolution and threatened by invasion by Bolsheviks, German authorities released Piłsudski and sent him to Warsaw in hope that he would help restore order on Germany's eastern border. The next day, 11<sup>th</sup> November, Piłsudski took over the power from the Regency Council (a temporary German authority over the territory of former Russian Empire under German military occupation) and announced re-establishment of Polish state with himself as a temporary head of the state. It is especially worth noting that he was accepted as the national leader almost by all Polish political groups in both Russia and Austria (the only group that refused to do so were communists aiming at establishing a nationless proletarian state and who supported Bolsheviks). A few weeks later Polish national uprising in the Poznań region in Germany started, which ended up with incorporation of this region to the newly re-emerged Polish state. Acceptance of Piłsudski as the leader of the nation and the state upon his arrival to Warsaw was confirmed by the fact that all leaders of political parties and groups (including 30,000 strong German military garrison) wanted to meet him. The number of people wanting to meet him was so great that he spent two days meeting them. Without any doubt he was a charismatic leader who united the nation in this critical moment and decisively contributed to the rebirth of Poland (one should not, of course, ignore the role of the conference in Versailles which accepted, in principle, Polish state).

Piłsudski strongly influenced internal political life and international position of Poland, and he did it due to his charisma. As mentioned earlier, his Polish-Lithuanian identity resulted in his understanding of Poland as the ancient Commonwealth. Consequently, he wanted to rebuild it as a federation comprising Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania and, possibly, Byelorussia (if not included to Lithuania). For this reason he refused peace with Bolshevik Russia because it required to resign from the territory of the former Great Duchy of Lithuania as a part of the newly reborn Commonwealth. The Polish-Bolshevik war of 1919–1920 had three stages: Polish offensive

(taking Kiev without fighting), Bolshevik counteroffensive, the battle of Warsaw (August 1920) with decisive victory of Poland which started a new offensive of the Polish army. The Warsaw victory, attributed to the military genius of Piłsudski, strengthened his prestige in Poland even more.

The Polish-Soviet war of 1919–1920 was in a sense a symbolic “war of younger brothers”: Bronisław Piłsudski and Alexander Ulianov were once united in their opposition against the tsarist regime, their younger brothers – Jozef Piłsudski and Vladimir Ulianov (Lenin) now headed two hostile camps; the one fighting for a universalistic ideology and a future world without nations and states, and the other fighting for a nationalist ideology and to revive a once existed state.

Despite this victory, his plans to restore the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth failed. Neither Ukrainians from eastern Galicia (the area of Lvov) nor Lithuanians from the area of Kaunas wanted a union with Poland, and those Ukrainians (as the Kiev-based Ukrainian People’s Republic) who were inclined for an alliance with Poland, were too weak to resist Bolsheviks and to be a valuable partner. Finally, the newly established Polish state annexed eastern Galicia defeating Ukrainian nationalists there (and making them hostile towards Poland, ready to join any enemy of Poland) and occupied and annexed the area of Vilnius which dramatically deteriorated relations with the newly established Lithuania, which never resigned from Vilnius.

After the Polish-Soviet war, Piłsudski gave up his official positions and became a “private person”. However, he was politically active criticizing what he called “anarchy of the parliament”. In May 1926, making use of his popularity and charisma in the army, he staged a coup d’état overthrowing the democratically elected parliament and government (in two-day fighting some 200 soldiers on both sides were killed, as a part of the army remained loyal to the government). According to the followers of Piłsudski, the coup d’état was necessary to defend Poland from anarchy and paralysis of the executive power, which once, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, led to the catastrophe. His critics argue that it was not necessary and that Piłsudski did not understand and did not accept democratic rules of the political game.

After the coup he did not accept any high rank position in the state, retaining a modest position of the “inspector of the armed forces”. Nevertheless, for everybody it was obvious that he was the true ruler of the state. He introduced authoritarian political system which left little room for political opposition. He practically appointed prime ministers and presidents of the republic. Despite (or because) of his authoritarianism he was quite popular in the society. There was a widespread belief that Poland would

remain safe as long as he was alive. He died in 1935 leaving the nation in uncertainty about its future. Four years later, in September 1939, two enemies: fascist Germany and the Soviet Union invaded Poland putting an end to the second independent Polish state.

As can be seen from the above analysis, Józef Piłsudski, more than anyone, contributed to regaining independence by Poland in 1918 and to defending it in 1920. Achievements and failures of the interwar Poland were also, to a large extent, results of his actions. In that sense he was the “father of the nation”, although, paradoxically, Polish nation state was not his ultimate goal, this goal being restoration of the multiethnic Commonwealth of the two (or three or four) nations, where his double Polish-Lithuanian identity could be placed.

#### **4.2. Andrei Sheptytskyi or Roman Szeptycki (1865–1944)**

His original Polish name was Roman Szeptycki, for Ukrainians he is known as Andrei Sheptytskyi (in the original Ukrainian spelling: Андрей Шептицький). He was born into a rich aristocratic family in eastern Galicia, then a province of the Habsburg monarchy, populated by several ethnic groups: Poles, Ruthenians, Jews, Germans, Armenians and others. There were also several religious groups: Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics, Orthodox, Jews, etc. The language of the Szeptycki family was Polish, but they also spoke French (language of international aristocracy) and German (language of the Empire). His mother was a daughter of the famous Polish writer Aleksander Fredro. His father, as many noblemen in that area, was of Ruthenian origin. His family was Roman Catholic. From the childhood he was meeting people of several religions, languages and identities. It seems that his identity was to a large extent determined by his mother, who in the time of his childhood confessed a Christian religiousness that tried to transcend ethnic boundaries (Roman Catholics = Poles, Greek Catholics and Orthodox = Ruthenians, etc.).

Maybe his mother's religiousness was behind his decision (when he was 18 years of age) to change the rite from Roman Catholicism to Uniate (Greek) Catholicism and to join the Uniate order of Basilians (where he adopted the order name, Andrei)<sup>3</sup>. Perhaps he considered that the Uniate

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<sup>3</sup> The change of rite by Roman Szeptycki is one of the most intriguing moments of his biography. For its interpretations see e.g. A. Zięba (ed.), 1994 and L. Hentosh, 2003.

Church, combining elements of Western (Roman Catholic) and Eastern (Orthodox) elements of Christianity, would be the best basis for reunification of Christianity. It should be stressed that his, a nobleman's, presence in the Greek Catholic Church was rather a rare phenomenon as this Church was generally associated with peasantry, while noblemen used to belong to the Roman Catholic Church. As early as in 1900, when he was 35 years old, he was appointed (by the Pope) to the position of Archbishop (or "metropolit"), head of the Greek Catholic Church in Galicia. It seems that a part (maybe majority) of Greek Catholics regarded this appointment with suspicion as a Polish (Roman Catholic) conspiracy to control Greek Catholics and the emerging national movements among Ruthenians.

That time was a period of intense national agitation in eastern Galicia, accompanied by social conflicts. On one side there was Polish national movement, recruiting most of its followers among Roman Catholics, gentry and urban intelligentsia (including that of German and Jewish origin), on the other side there were two national projects among Greek Catholics and Orthodox: a pan-Ruthenian (evolving into Russian or Moscovophile orientation) and Ukrainian (retaining that Ukrainians both in Russia and in Austrian Galicia were a separate nation, neither Poles nor Russians). These two projects were addressed mostly to peasantry (except Roman Catholic peasantry).

In the ethnic and social conflicts of that time archbishop Sheptytskyi defended interests of his fellow believers gaining gradually their trust and respect. He was also a political activist, member of Austrian parliament (of its Chamber of Lords). It seems that due to his personal contacts with the community of the Uniate Church he identified himself with this community more and more, becoming mentally and ideologically Ruthenian or, better to say, Ukrainian. By his personal prestige and activity, not only in Galicia and Austria, but also in Vatican and internationally, by his use of the local language (until then considered as depreciable peasant dialect) he tremendously contributed to the advance of Ukrainian nationalism (and to the defeat of the pro-Russian project in Galicia).

Decisive for the fate of the Polish and Ukrainian national movements, and very important for the Szeptycki family, was the year 1918. It was the year of open military conflict between the two nationalisms claiming for the same territory of eastern Galicia. Eventually Ukrainian nationalists were defeated and the territory was annexed by Poland. In that time archbishop Sheptytskyi firmly stood on the Ukrainian side. He visited some West European countries and the USA advocating, unsuccessfully, for recognition of the Ukrainian



state and turning attention to problems of Ukrainians. In the interwar Poland he represented a kind of “passive loyalty” towards the Polish state, always representing interests of the Ukrainian population. In that time Ukrainian national movement in Poland intensified, taking forms of terrorism. In September 1939, after the collapse of Poland, eastern Galicia was occupied by the Soviet Union. Soviet authorities, like earlier Polish ones, tolerated him and did not dare to arrest or force him to resign from the office being afraid of reactions of the Ukrainian people. Germans, who occupied this territory since mid-1941 to mid-1944, and Soviets since mid-1944 to his natural death in November this year, behaved in the same way (he was buried with solemn assistance of the Soviet army).

In his long 44 years of service as the head of the Greek Catholic Church in eastern Galicia, he tremendously contributed to the formation of the Ukrainian nation and to making the Uniate Church a national Ukrainian Church and a stronghold of Ukrainian nationalism. In contemporary Ukraine, especially in western Ukraine, where Ukrainian nationalism is the strongest and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church prevails, archbishop Sheptytskyi is a venerable national hero.

Poles, especially those coming from eastern territories of the interwar Poland, consider him, in best case, as a “controversial personality”, and in the worst case as a “murderer” responsible for creating intellectual atmosphere in which radical Ukrainian nationalism grew up. This nationalism is, according to this opinion, responsible not only for anti-Polish terrorism in the interwar period but first of all for anti-Polish ethnic cleansing in eastern Galicia and Volynia in 1943, when up to 200,000 Poles (according to various estimates), innocent civilian population, were killed in a cruel way by Ukrainian nationalists. According to this opinion, archbishop Sheptytskyi did too little and too late to stop the killing. For this reason Polish Catholic Church opposes his beatification proposed by the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

Contribution of archbishop Sheptytskyi to the formation of the Ukrainian nationalism seems to be unquestionable (the question is, if he can be, or to what extent he can be, blamed for atrocities committed in the name of the Ukrainian nationalism, and for hostilities between Ukrainians and Poles). Such an outcome of his activity is a tremendous paradox, given that his original idea was to unite all Christians in peace and harmony.

Szeptycki family – the five Szeptycki brothers (not counting two who died in the age of two and 17 years) – can serve as an exemplification of difficult choices of persons of mixed ethno-cultural background and of the role of accident in such choices. Out of five Szeptycki brothers two opted

for being Ukrainian and three for being Polish. One of the latter – Stanisław Szeptycki (1867–1950) is a Polish national hero. Stanisław Szeptycki, unlike his older brother, a priest, chose military career in the Austrian army. In the World War I he was the commander of one of brigades of the Polish Legions (another commander was Piłsudski) and in 1917 chief commander of the Legions and chief commander of *Polnische Wehrmacht* (Polish ethnic military formation within the German army). Since November 1918 he was one of the highest ranked officers (general) in the army of independent Poland, playing an important role in the Polish-Soviet war and in other military activities, like supporting the anti-German, Silesian uprisings. In the independent Poland he was placed at the highest positions in the army. In 1923 he was the minister of military affairs (national defence) (he disagreed with Piłsudski and after 1926 coup d'état withdrew from politics). Another Szeptycki brother – Kazimierz (Clement) Szeptycki (1867–1951) – just like his brother Roman (Andrei) changed the rite and became a Greek Catholic monk. He was also a member of Austrian parliament. During World War II he did a lot to save Jews (in 1995, after his death, Israel rewarded him with the medal “Righteous among peoples of the world” dedicated to those, who rescued Jews during the holocaust). In 1947 he was arrested by KGB and died in a KGB prison. In 2001 he was declared saint of the Catholic Church by the pope John Paul II, during his visit to Ukraine (maybe his beatification was a substitution for non-beatification of his controversial brother).

### **4.3. Tomáš Masaryk (1850–1937)**

He was born into a modest family (his mother was a cook and father a coachmen) in Moravia, not far away from Vienna, in the then Habsburg monarchy. His family was multiethnic: his father was a Slovak from nearby Hungary (a part of the monarchy) and mother, according to Masaryk himself, “was German” (Doubek, 1999). “German” meant that her language was German, otherwise she was a German-speaking Czech. German was the main language in the Masaryk family, but in his childhood he also mastered Czech and Slovak (which are closely related). Consequently, Masaryk was Czech-German, bilingual and therefore easily took part both in the Czech (Slavic) and German-Austrian political and cultural life.

He studied in Vienna when he met many people of Czech and pan-Slavonic orientation, so that in his youth he was strongly influenced by the idea of pan-Slavism. After graduating from the university he was offered two jobs: at the newly established University of Tschernowitz (Bukovina, part of

the Habsburg Empire, now south-western Ukraine) and at a newly established Czech part of the Prague University (division of the Prague University along linguistic lines, which meant in fact establishing a new, Czech university, was one of achievements of the Czech national movement). Teaching in Tschernowitz was in German, teaching in Prague was in Czech. Masaryk chose the Prague University because he preferred Prague rather than because he preferred the Czech language. From 1882 to the outbreak of the World War I, he held the position of Professor of Philosophy at the Prague University. One may say that working at a Czech university finally made him Czech.

His road to Czechism, however, led via Slavism. In his youth he was probably more Slav than Czech, but his personal contacts with Russia (some visits to Russia as a professor of the university) considered then by pan-Slavs in Austria as “motherland of all Slavs” and a deeper insight into conflicts within the Slavic world (first of all between Russians and Poles) made him sceptical about possibility of creation of a Slavic nation or community, or Slavic solidarity.

Masaryk combined his activity as a scholar and publisher (he was a head editor in some journals dedicated both, to specialists and to the general public, both in Czech and in German) with his political activity. He was a member of the Austrian parliament (1891–1893 when he was forced by his party to resign for being too loyal to Austria and in 1907–1914). As politician, despite his high ambitions, he was not very successful. One of the reasons of his political defeat was his personal characteristics: inability for team party politics in a democratic system and his ambitions to be party leader. These qualities were appalling for independent, strong personalities. Therefore, he could only organize around himself small groups of young, inexperienced followers.

His socio-political views can be characterized as liberal-democratic and progressive. He was an adversary of both Marxism, and clericalism and conservatism, especially Catholic clericalism (this attitude towards the Catholic Church may explain his decision to convert to Protestantism). As regards his opinions on Czech nationalism, he saw it in cultural and economic terms and until the outbreak of the World War I never raised the question of an independent Czech state. As scholar, political thinker and politician, he wrote both for the Czech public in Czech, and in German for all-Austrian (including German-speaking Czechs) and international public. By no means could he be considered as a radical Czech nationalist. Even more, he became known to the broad Czech public in the mid-1980s for his

critical attitude towards would-be monuments of early medieval Czech literature “discovered” and published at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He was one of those, who proved that these manuscripts were a hoax, which came as a shock for the Czech national movement.

In the eve of the outbreak of the war, after 30 years of active academic, public and political life, Masaryk was a recognizable personality but hardly any charismatic national leader. His prime time was the World War I, especially years 1916–1918, when he became a really charismatic national leader. During the war he realized that Austria-Hungary would collapse and that an independent Czechoslovak state was the best solution. The idea of union of Czechs and Slovaks can be traced back to his personal origin, to pan-Slavonic ideology and to his geopolitical considerations. In 1916, as a self-appointed representative of the Czech nation he travelled abroad, to Italy, France, UK, Russia and the USA meeting émigré Czech and Slovak politicians and leaders of host countries, advocating for the idea of independent Czechoslovakia. In Russia he organized a quite numerous Czechoslovak army (composed mostly by Czech war prisoners in Russia, who otherwise usually voluntarily had left the Austrian army and joined Russians for not willing to fight for Austria and because of their pan-Slavic sentiments). This army, fighting against Austria, was a military factor underpinning Czechoslovak political aspirations. As can be seen, this tactics was similar to the tactics of the Polish national movement with a difference, that while Poles (as an autonomous military formation) were fighting on the Austrian side against Russia, Czechs were fighting against Austria on the Russian side. In 1918 Masaryk met the US president Wilson, convincing him to back the idea of independent Czechoslovakia. During his stay in Washington Masaryk proclaimed the establishment of independent Czechoslovakia. In November 1918 Masaryk came back to Prague enthusiastically received by the Czechs as the “father of the nation”. He (aged 68 at that time) was then elected president of the Czechoslovak Republic, re-elected several times. In 1935 he resigned from this office (for health reasons) and died in 1937.

One of undesirable outcomes of establishing the independent Czechoslovakia was the ethnic conflict between the Czechs and the Germans<sup>4</sup>. A great part of the German population, despite their rights as national minority, did

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<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to note that mixed Czech-German marriages (similar to that to which Masaryk was born) in that time became very rare. See L. Nesládková (2003, p. 14).

not consider Czechoslovakia as their own state, frustrated by the downgrading of the German language and by their status as a national minority rather than a state nation. This conflict paved the way for Nazi Germany to destroy Czechoslovakia and to occupy Czech lands in 1939. The role of German minority in these events, after World War II inspired Eduard Beneš, Masaryk's closest follower and his successor as president of Czechoslovakia, to "deport" German population. Public and even private use of the German language, otherwise Masaryk's mother tongue, was banned for several years (see Korbel, 2002, p. 62).

#### **4.4. Some other cases of national activists of mixed ethno-cultural background**

Below, there are only a few cases confirming complexity of the choice of national identity by persons of mixed ethno-cultural background in Central-Eastern Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Jan Henryk Dąbrowski (Dombrowski)** (1755–1818). His father was a Polish nobleman and mother was of German-Scottish origin (a Calvinist). He was born in a town near Cracow (then and now Poland). When he was 11, he was brought to Saxony and later started a military career there. He was linguistically Germanized and influenced by the German culture<sup>5</sup>, without, however, forgetting his Polish roots. In 1792, during the partitioning of Poland, he dedicated his life and personal property to fight for Poland. Among his activities and wars, in which he took part personally, the most important from the present point of view is organizing and commanding of Polish Legions in Italy at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which fought Austria for Italian independence and were an ally of Napoleon Bonaparte. At that time Polish national flag was established and national anthem was written (in fact, it was a song popular among the soldiers). In the anthem itself, Dąbrowski's name is mentioned (he is the only Pole, whose name is mentioned in the Polish national anthem). Given that he was more fluent in German than in Polish, he communicated with his Polish soldiers via interpreters. He wrote his memoirs in German. In the Napoleonic wars he fought on the side of Napoleon. It can be added, that in 1802 some of soldiers of the legions – some 5 thousand troops, together with French troops, were sent by Napoleon to Santo Domingo (Haiti) to crush the revolt

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<sup>5</sup> Polish historian, Andrzej Walicki, considers J.H. Dąbrowski as "ethnically non-Polish" (see Walicki, 2000, p. 148).

of black slaves. A group of Polish soldiers, for idealistic reasons (“liberté, égalité, fraternité”) went over to the side of the insurgents. Most of those who survived the war and diseases, returned to Europe or migrated to America. Some 400 men remained on the island and married black women. Some of their descendants, black people speaking French or the local Creole, still have Polish family names, decorate their homes with Polish flags and call themselves “Poloné Nwa” (Black Poles”, in Haitian Creole)<sup>6</sup>. Until the late 1920s Haitian constitution stipulated that Haiti would grant refuge and citizenship to every Pole requiring it.

**Wojciech Kętrzyński (Albert von Winkler)** (1838–1918). He was born as Albert Winkler, in a German-speaking Protestant family in Eastern Prussia (now north-eastern Poland). When he was 18, he discovered that his grandfather was a Polish nobleman and that his (grandfather’s) original name was Wojciech Kętrzyński, later changed to “Winkler”. In fact, his grandfather married a German woman and educated his children as Germans. Albert in this very moment decided to “return” to Polish roots, to learn Polish and to be an active Polish patriot<sup>7</sup>. He changed his name to Wojciech Kętrzyński. He was active in waking up Polish national consciousness in Prussia/Germany. His 40 years of activity as a director of Ossolineum – a publishing house, library and scientific institute (in 1878–1918), Lvov-based centre of Polish language and culture, was of special importance. The role of this institution was crucial in defending and promoting Polish language and identity in all the three parts of Polish lands under foreign empires.

**Iwanowski brothers**<sup>8</sup>: Jerzy (1878–1966), Waclaw (1880–1943), Tadeusz (1882-1971), Stanislaw (?). They were born into a gentry family in a village (private property) near Grodno/Hrodna (today northwestern Byelorussia), not far from Vilnius. The family was Catholic, spoke Polish, and its identity was “Lithuanian” in the above described meaning of belonging to the ancient Great Duchy of Lithuania, a part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. All of them studied in St. Petersburg – capital city of the Russian Empire and a place where people from every part of the Empire could be met. During

<sup>6</sup> See Z. Pinchinat-Witucka (2010), an extensive description of the history and present day of descendants of Polish soldiers in Haiti can be found in a book by Italian journalist Ricardo Orizio: *Tribù bianche perdute* (Lost white tribes) see R. Orizio (2009).

<sup>7</sup> For more about Kętrzyński/Winkler’s life see Kłoskowska (2005).

<sup>8</sup> For more about Iwanowski brothers, especially about Waclaw Iwanowski see Jagiełło (2000, p. 116–122).

their study in St. Petersburg they met various people, which can explain their different choices in the future. **Jerzy** after graduating from the Petersburg University worked as an engineer in metallurgical plants in Częstochowa (now central Poland), populated compactly by Polish population, where Polish national identity was strong. Maybe because of this environment, he became (or remained) Polish. He took part as volunteer in the Polish-Bolshevik war (on the Polish side) and held the office of the Minister of Industry and Trade, and of Labour and Social Affairs in the first governments of independent Poland. In 1930s he was also a senator. **Waclaw** (or **Vaclau Ivanouski**, in Byelorussian) during his study in Petersburg approached a circle of people proposing Byelorussian nationalism and became one of its most active members. He established a Byelorussian-language publishing house, a Byelorussian periodical, Byelorussian schools, wrote in Byelorussian thus contributing to establishing Byelorussian standard language. In his political activity he tried to gain autonomy, if not independence, for Byelorussia. To do so, he tried to collaborate with the Germans occupying Minsk during the World War I, with Bolsheviks, with Poland (with Piłsudski he negotiated establishing Polish-Byelorussian federation) and with Germany during the World War II. He was killed by an unknown perpetrator, while being the Mayor of Minsk, appointed by German occupation authorities. For him, Byelorussia was the true successor to the Great Duchy of Lithuania. **Tadeusz** (**Tadas Ivanauskas**, in Lithuanian) during his study in Petersburg met ethnic Baltic Lithuanians who convinced him that they were “the true Lithuanians” and that Lithuanians should return to their roots, which meant, among other things, learning Lithuanian (Baltic) language. He did learn and use Lithuanian. During the Polish-Lithuanian conflict in 1919–1920 he chose Lithuania and changed his name to sound Lithuanian. In independent Lithuania, and then in the Soviet Lithuania, he was an outstanding scientists (biologist, zoologist), professor of Kaunas and then Lithuanian Vilnius University. About the fourth Iwanowski brother – **Stanisław**, little is known besides the fact, that he was a lawyer and lived in Vilnius. His identity was perhaps local or the old Polish-Lithuanian.

**Dzierżyński** brothers. They were born into an impoverished noble family in the area, where Piłsudski and Iwanowski brothers came from (now in Byelorussia, then the Russian Empire). Out of several Dzierżyński brothers, the two – **Feliks** (1877–1926) and **Władysław** (1881–1942) deserve special attention. The former, known also as the “Iron Felix” or the “Bloody Felix”, the worldwide, ill-famous, Bolshevik revolutionary, founder of CheKa (predecessor of NKVD and KGB) and the terror machine of the Bolshevik

Russia, solved his identity problem by rejecting nationalism and opting for internationalism and universalistic communist ideology. The latter, Władysław, chose Poland and became outstanding physician, military doctor and university professor. He was killed (shot dead) by Germans in a street execution of 100 Poles during the German occupation of Poland.

## 5. CONCLUSION

As can be seen from the above discussion, the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially its second half, and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Central-Eastern Europe was a time of activism of national movements and a time of searching for national identity. Old identifications: with non-existing states (Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of the Two Nations, Great Duchy of Lithuania, Kingdom of Bohemia), with existing multi-ethnic empires (Russian Empire, Austrian Empire) or with mythical communities (Ruthenia, Slavia) receded, giving way to modern national identities: Polish, Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Czech (or Czechoslovak), Russian and German, or to a “nationless” (international) identity. Dramatic events – revolutions (like in 1905 and 1917 in Russia) and wars (wars for independence of Poland by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Napoleonic wars and, especially, the World War I) created perfect conditions for charismatic personalities as national leaders. An important role in national movements, as their rank-and-file activists and as their charismatic leaders, was played by people of mixed ethno-cultural background. Their road to their respective nations was not always straight and was often determined by accidental factors which are best illustrated by biographies of members of the same family (Szeptycki brothers, Iwanowski brothers, Dzierżyński brothers). Also final outcomes of their efforts often considerably differed from original ideas. The way of fighting for these ideas differed depending on political system of the given place and time ranging from democracy, through underground semi-terrorist activity, to personal participation in battlefields. The above described biographies also reveal that some important identity markers, like language and religion, not always determined one’s ethnic or national identity.



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Section II

**HISTORICAL REGIONS IN WESTERN  
MEMBER STATES OF THE EUROPEAN  
UNION**



## **CRISES IN THE BRUSSELS-CAPITAL REGION. WILL BELGIUM SURVIVE 2011?**

### **1. BASIC FACTS**

The Kingdom of Belgium (further referred to as Belgium) is a constitutional monarchy and the parliamentary democracy. Belgium has a population of about 10.7 million people. The head of state is King Albert II. Since 1993, Belgium has been a Federal State.

Belgium is home to three linguistic groups: the Dutch-speaking Flemish, with a population of 6.161.600, the French-speaking Walloons with 3.456.775<sup>1</sup> and a small group of German-speakers with a population of 71.500<sup>2</sup> living mostly in the east of Wallonia<sup>3</sup>. The administratively separated Brussels-Capital Region is bilingual (Dutch and French). An estimated 59%<sup>4</sup> of the Belgian population speaks Dutch (often referred to as *Flemish*), and French is spoken by 40%.

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<sup>1</sup> The data on population may differ depending on the sources. The key factor to understand the origin of the conflicts influencing politics of Belgium is proportion of the French and Dutch speaking population versus lingual and cultural space covered by them in the course of history. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flanders](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flanders); <http://www.wallonie.be>.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.dglive.be>.

<sup>3</sup> “Citizens from other countries in the German-speaking Community”. The German-speaking Community. <http://www.dglive.be>.

<sup>4</sup> Flanders: 6.079 million inhabitants and about 15% of Brussels's 1.019 million that makes 6.23 million or 59.3% of the 10.5 million inhabitants of Belgium.

French: Wallonia (3.414 – 0.093 = 3.321 million) and 85% of the Brussels inhabitants (0.866 million) makes 4.187 million or 39.8%;

German: 70,400 in the German-speaking Community; 20,000–25,000 speakers of German in Wallonia outside the geographical boundaries of their official Community, or 0.9%. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belgium#Languages>.

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Belgium is administratively divided into five Flemish and five Walloon provinces that, in turn, are divided into 589 counties/municipalities (308 Flemish – 281 Walloon)<sup>5</sup>. The Constitution of 1993 established a unique federal state based on culture and language (communities) and on administrative division (regions). The three-level structure (federal, regional, and community governments) was a compromise reached to minimise linguistic, cultural, social and economic tensions<sup>6</sup>.

Table 1. The three language communities and three regions

Regions	Communities	Names in national languages
the Flemish Region	the Flemish Community (Dutch-speaking)	Vlaamse Gemeenschap
the Walloon Region	the French (i.e., French-speaking) Community of Belgium	Communauté Française de Belgique
the Brussels-Capital Region (bilingual)	the German-speaking Community	Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Although the structure of the federal state would allow seven parliaments and governments, in 1980 Flemish politicians decided to merge both. As an effect of that Flemish decision, Belgium has six parliaments (councils) and six governments.

### 1.1. Language conflict

Struggle for equal lingual rights of the Dutch speaking Flemish in French-dominated Belgium has a long tradition. For centuries there has not been any language border between speakers of Belgian French, standard Dutch or standard German. The Germanic language space was composed of such languages as West Flemish, East Flemish, Brabantic, Limburgish, Ripuarian (transitional dialects as Low Dietsch), Moselle Franconian dialect of Trier and Luxembourgish. The Romance language space was made of Picard,

<sup>5</sup> State structure: <http://www.flanders.be>.

<sup>6</sup> Understanding the federal state: [http://www.belgium.be/en/about\\_belgium/government/federale\\_staat/](http://www.belgium.be/en/about_belgium/government/federale_staat/).

Walloon (with four distinct dialects around the cities of Charleroi, Namur, Liège and Bastogne), Lorrain and Champenois. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century standard languages dominated in Wallonia (French) and Flanders (Dutch) but the upper classes most often spoke French in both parts of the Kingdom (De Vries, Willemys and Burger, 1994). As an effect of the language struggle during the 1950s and 1960s, the language areas were established in 1963 and included as a part of the Belgian Constitution in 1970. The border between the language areas is the so-called linguistic border. It is based on the actual language border between the language-spaces (with certain exceptions).

## 1.2. The rings of fire

Decennia long conflicts of interest between the Flemish and Walloons, based on economic and lingual differences, has been most visible in the area of the capital (Deschouwer and Buelens 1999, p. 439–463) – The Brussels Capital Region, Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde (BHV)<sup>7</sup> and the language facilities.

**The Brussels-Capital Region** makes part of Flemish Brabant. It comprises 19 municipalities, including the City of Brussels itself (the constitutional capital of Belgium), which is the only officially bilingual part of Belgium<sup>8</sup>. Constitutionally, it is a politically-distinct Region, where the Flemish and French Communities exercise their authority. Historically the local language of Brussels was Dutch, but in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, The Capital Region has been dominated by the French-speaking population (about 85–90% as opposed to about 10–15% are native Dutch-speakers). Strong economic prosperity in the Brussels area has resulted in the expansion of its suburbs and creation of a French-speaking majority in some municipalities (Velaers, 1999, p. 595–625).

It is important to notice that Brussels does not constitute a separate community. The Flemish Community Commission (VGC) and the French Community Commission (COCOF) act in Brussels on behalf of their respective Communities.

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<sup>7</sup> “Brussel-Halle-Vilvoorde voor beginners”, „De Standaard”. 2010, 04-13:  
<http://www.standaard.be>.

<sup>8</sup> “La Constitution belge (Art. 4)”. the Belgian Senate. May 2007:  
<http://www.senate.be>.

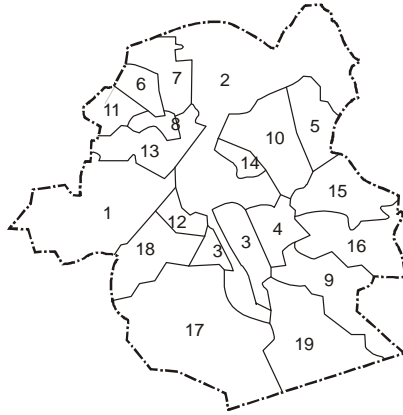


Fig. 1. The Brussels-Capitol Region makes part of Flemish Brabant. It comprises 19 municipalities, including the City of Brussels proper (the constitutional capital of Belgium)  
Source: wikipedia/commons/e/e1/Brussels\_Hoofdstedelijk\_Gewest



Fig. 2. Flemish Brabant with 54 municipalities  
Source: <http://www.haviko.org/images/>

**Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde (BHV)** is a Belgian electoral and judicial arrondissement (after the location of its main courts) in the centre of the country, and is composed of:

- the officially bilingual (French and Dutch) Brussels-Capital Region, which coincides with the administrative arrondissement of Brussels-Capitol,
- the officially monolingual Dutch-speaking area around it, Halle-Vilvoorde, which in turn coincides with the Halle-Vilvoorde administrative arrondissement<sup>9</sup>.

It is rather an exceptional situation, because otherwise the borders of all Belgian electoral arrondissements correspond with the borders of Belgian provinces. The arrondissement BHV comprises around 1,595,000 inhabitants<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> For elections of Flemish Parliament electoral arrondissements Flemish Brabant is divided into arrondissement Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde, and the arrondissement of Leuven. There is a special arrangement for the provinces of Flemish and Walloon Brabant : for the allocation of seats between the party lists on the level of the former province of Brabant, lists can be combined between Leuven and Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde (Dutch-speaking parties do this) or between Nivelles and Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde (French-speaking parties do this). This practice is known in French as *apparentement* and in Dutch as *apparentering*.

<sup>10</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> January 2006, Statistics Belgium.



**The municipalities with language facilities**, also called *municipalities with linguistic facilities* or shortened to *municipalities with facilities*, were created to facilitate relations between two major linguistic rivals. They have special law provisions designed to protect the rights of their linguistic minorities.

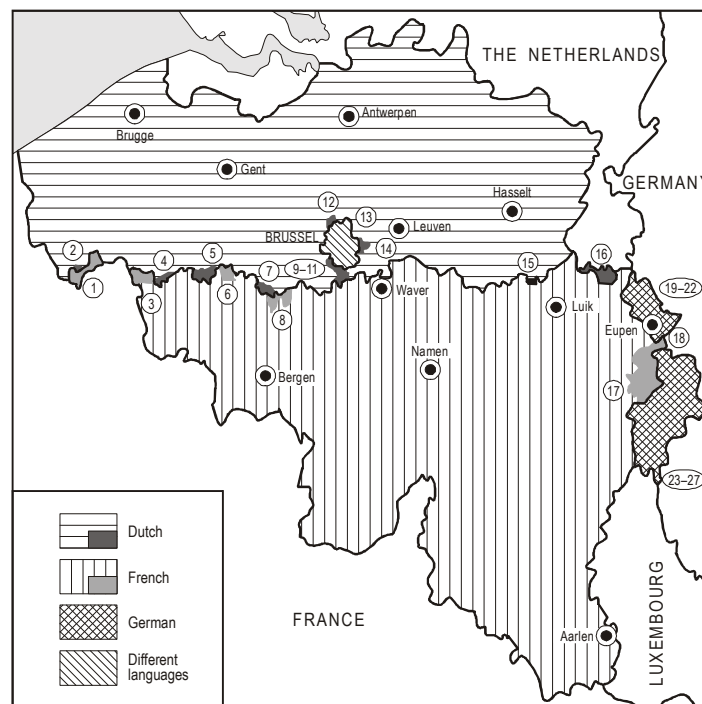


Fig. 3. Recently, 27 municipalities with language facilities have functioned in Belgium  
Source: after <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/>

In Flanders there are two kinds of municipalities with facilities:

a) rim municipalities, which are situated in the Flemish rim around the Brussels-Capital Region and form part of Flemish Brabant,

b) language border municipalities situated close to the border with Wallonia. In these municipalities, the minority language can be used to deal with ministries of local and federal government, and for teaching in some primary schools. The language of majority must, however, be used for dealing with provincial and regional authorities, and for secondary school teaching. French-speakers in Flanders and in the German language area, as well as Dutch- and German- speakers in Wallonia, can get administrative documents from local authorities and from some federal authorities in their

mother tongue. Recently in Belgium there has been 27 functioning municipalities, which were allowed to have their own language facilities<sup>11</sup>.

## 2. PROBLEM ON THE PERIPHERY OF BRUSSELS

In the suburbs of Brussels<sup>12</sup> there are six municipalities with language facilities and 29 other Flemish municipalities with a growing number of French-speaking families<sup>13</sup>. Lingual situation of Brussels has been shaped by four factors:

1. The **Frankification of Brussels**, which basically transformed Brussels from a Dutch-speaking city to one that is bilingual, with French as both the majority language and *lingua franca*.

2. **Foreign immigration**. Membership of the European Economic Community, later the EU, resulted in economic immigration from southern Europe and later from Turkey, Morocco (a former French colony), and the Congo (a former Belgian colony). In the period of over forty years the number of non-Belgian inhabitants grew from 7% to 56%<sup>14</sup>.

3. The **Frankification of immigrants**. The newcomers usually adopt French. Their children attended French-language education, and used French in their circles of friends and at home (Janssens, 2001). Immigration reduced the percentage of Dutch speakers and led to further Frankification of the city (Witte and Meynen, 2006, p. 181).

4. **Internationalization**. The internationalization of Brussels brought an influx of foreign immigrants who chose French more often than Dutch because of its traditional importance in international relations. Natural expansion of Brussels, due to the growth of international EU institutions, more and more foreign diplomats and other international personnel transferred to Brussels, and a growing number of formerly Dutch-speaking municipalities

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<sup>11</sup> [http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faciliteitengemeente:](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faciliteitengemeente)  
[http://www.vlaamserand.be/\\_docs/Taalwetwijzer.pdf](http://www.vlaamserand.be/_docs/Taalwetwijzer.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Drogenbos, Kraainem, Linkebeek, Sint-Genesius-Rode, Wemmel and Wezembeek-Oppem.

<sup>13</sup> "Sociaal-economisch profiel van de Vlaamse Rand en een blik op het Vlaamse karakter" (doc). Government of the Flemish Community. March 23, 2007. <http://www.vlaanderen.be>.

<sup>14</sup> "Laatste 45 jaar in Brussel: 50% bevolking van autochtoon naar allochtoon". *Bericht uit het Gewisse*. Non-Profit Data 2007, 04-04. <http://www.npdata.be>.

in surrounding Flanders explain why Brussels became predominantly French-speaking. “It caused new worry for the French-speaking inhabitants, who were afraid that English would become the new lingua franca of the city. This difference between Anglicization and Frankification is that there is no repression or coercion associated with it. Now, more Brussels inhabitants claim to speak fluent English than fluent Dutch, 35% to 28%, respectively”<sup>15</sup>. Traditionally the northern Europeans use English or German instead.

### 3. RULING OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT

Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde electoral arrondissement has been a controversial and highly disputed subject within Belgium. New electoral districts were created for the elections in 2003 and were based on the borders of provinces instead of arrondissements. The reason for a change was that the existing electoral areas were considered too small. There was one exception made for BHV. It became the only electoral district which covers more than one region (West Flemish and Capitol region).

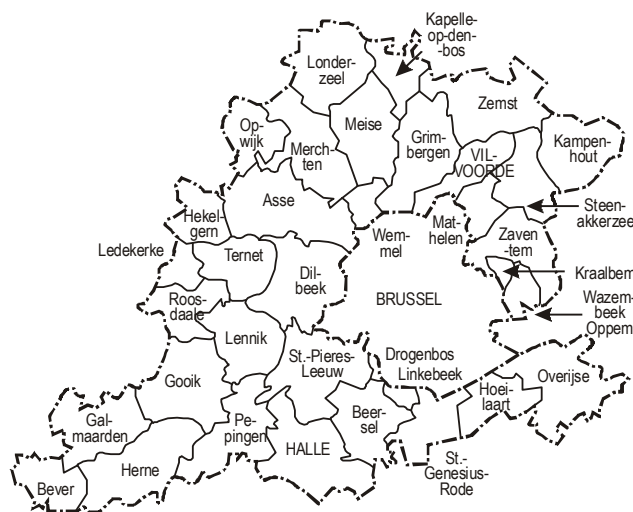


Fig. 4. Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde (BHV) is a Belgian electoral and judicial arrondissement

Source: after <http://www.splits-bhv.be/images/>

<sup>15</sup> Francis Dubois, “Welcome supplante Welkom à Bruxelles”, “Le Soir” 2008, 01-08, <http://www.lesoir.be>.

Only a week after the election in 2003, the Arbitration Court (now the Constitutional Court) declared the new election law unconstitutional. “It judged that, among other things, the definition of the electoral arrondissement Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde for national and European elections is a violation of the non-discrimination principle between Belgians, taken in combination with articles 1 through 5 of the Constitution (especially article 4, defining the language areas).

However, it left open the precise nature of any solution, and thus did not demand the splitting of the electoral district, but neither did it allow it to be kept as it is now. Nevertheless, the Court declared the results of the then-complete 2003 elections (held under the law declared unconstitutional) to be valid, to avoid having to redo the elections”<sup>16</sup>.

a) What went wrong?

The present electoral system allows French-speakers from Brussels who move into a commune in the Flemish Region to vote for French-speaking Brussels candidates, but Dutch-speakers who move into the monolingual Walloon Region cannot vote for their Flemish candidates from the two regions, where Dutch is an official language.

Another disparity concerns the situation where the French-speaking candidates from Brussels can compete for votes in part of Flanders without being subject to the entire valid legislation (only to the Belgian laws, but not to the Flemish laws applicable in the Flemish region), whereas Flemish candidates in the Walloon Region always have to obey both Belgian and regional/community legislation. This is considered to be a form of discrimination, although of minor importance.

b) BHV the central issue

In the 2004 elections, for the Flemish Parliament all Flemish parties had included in their programs the demand to split BHV. In the coalition agreement it was mentioned as the issue which had “to be realized immediately”<sup>17</sup>. The common political stand on that matter was signed by the three large Flemish parties: CD&V (Christian-Democratic & Flemish), VLD (Flemish Liberals and Democrats) and SP.A (Different Socialist Party), in

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<sup>16</sup> Arbitration Court, decision (arrest) 73/2003 of 26 May 2003. Grondwettelijk Hof.be

<sup>17</sup> “Het kiesarrondissement BHV”, “Het Vlaamse regeerakkoord is duidelijk over de splitsing”, [http://www.haviko.org/teksten/CDenV\\_DOSSIER\\_BHV.pdf](http://www.haviko.org/teksten/CDenV_DOSSIER_BHV.pdf).

addition to the Flemish-nationalist N-VA (New Flemish Alliance) and the left-liberal Spirit. Since the Flemish government or the Flemish parliament have no legal power to pursue the case, the issue was meant to be seen as a commitment of the then governing parties at a federal level, VLD and SP.A, which had adopted the position to settle the case in the federal government.

The Flemish politicians want to split BHV into two electoral districts, like it has been with the Senate elections: the arrondissement of Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde, and the arrondissement of Leuven. The acceptable option would be to return to the situation of electoral arrondissements before 2003. The French-speakers favour keeping it as is or, at a minimum, splitting it with concessions.

c) The Walloons and Flemings stands

The French-speaking inhabitants of Belgium generally object to splitting BHV. If it would become unavoidable, the Francophone community would insist on incorporation of six special-facility communes for Brussels proper. In their opinion it would create a previously non-existent “corridor” between the French-speaking region of Wallonia and majority French-speaking inhabitants of Brussels. Those citizens of Belgium who live abroad may choose in which electoral arrondissement they want to be registered. A majority of them choose to be included on the list of voters in BHV<sup>18</sup>. “Since this is one judicial arrondissement, a legal case can be handled by both Dutch-speaking and French-speaking judges. This causes a problem comparable with the electoral situation: Brussels is bilingual, and Halle-Vilvoorde is monolingual Dutch, so it is possible that a French judge is appointed to hear a legal case from the Dutch-speaking Halle-Vilvoorde region, which is unfair from a Flemish point of view” – explains author of the note on situation in BHV<sup>19</sup>.

Many French-speaking politicians claim that “those French-speakers who live in the Flemish Region should have the right to be treated as a linguistic minority that falls under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. This would then give them a kind of an 'extra-territorial' voting right” – writes three French authors (Delgrange, Mares and Meier, 2006, p. 311–340).

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<sup>18</sup> “*Franstaligen in buitenland stemmen vooral in BHV*”, *deredactie.be* (VRT nieuws) 2010, 05-13. <http://www.deredactie.be>.

<sup>19</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde>.

d) Two principles

French-speaking and Dutch-speaking politicians come out from two opposite principles: personality and territoriality. What does this mean? The French-speaking support the personality principle, that is, the right to use one's own language wherever one wishes. It applies as well to the counties where "the strong minority" of French-speaking people live. They should have rights to the correspondence in their native language even on the territories of the Dutch-speaking counties in Flanders. The Dutch speakers object to this concept referring to their opposite view – the territoriality principle. In Flanders, separated by the language border, the only official language is Dutch. The same is true in Wallonia, where French is the only official language. It is only Brussels where the two languages have equal rights. BHV violates those two principles. It is so because transformation of the unitarian state into a federal state has not yet been accomplished.

e) Stand of Belgian political parties on the issue

Parties such as Christian Democrats, Liberals, and Socialists, as well as the Green parties, with traditionally long participation in the Belgian government, usually refuse to speak openly about a possible partitioning of Belgium. For many politicians connected with those parties, this question seems to be a taboo and is only discussed from time to time by mainstream politicians in order to menace the other community<sup>20</sup>.

Most Francophones argue that the state reform is unnecessary, while all Flemish political parties demand a severe reform of the Belgian state. In Flanders, several large parties openly call for a partition of the country<sup>21</sup>. The largest is the far right-wing Vlaams Belang party (Flemish Interest). "This party called for a splitting of the country to advance their claim of a national identity, culture"<sup>22</sup> and institutions, and argue that Belgium is an "unnatural" and "artificial" state, formed simply as a buffer between France and other European powers during 19<sup>th</sup> century conflicts. A majority of Flemish political parties describe their demands as limited to seeking greater regional autonomy and decentralization of government. Some public opinion polls show that approximately 46% of the Flemish people support secession from

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<sup>20</sup> Jean Quatremer, "L'appel à une «Belgique française» [Call for a "French Belgium"]", "Libération" 2007, 12-15), <http://www.liberation.fr>.

<sup>21</sup> 30% of the Dutch-speaking members of the federal parliament and 17% of the federal parliament.

<sup>22</sup> "The Manifesto of the Vlaams Belang". <http://flemishrepublic.org/manifesto.htm>.

Belgium. Other polls indicate only 12% of the Flemings want the end of Belgium. A substantial number of those surveyed (37%) want more responsibilities to be devolved to communities and the regions<sup>23</sup>. Many French-speakers are of the opinion that there is sufficient regional autonomy and that Flemish demands are exaggerated in nature<sup>24</sup>.

Openly separatist parties are those which emerged recently: New-Flemish Alliance and List Dedecker<sup>25</sup>. The heart of the problem for them is not the partition of Belgium but its federalization (NV-A) also called regionalization or communitarization.

In Wallonia and Brussels, the only party, being openly separatist, is the Wallonia-France Rally<sup>26</sup>. Although it has no elected representative at either the national or regional level, its demands for the partition of Belgium and union of Wallonia and Brussels with France recently received some attention in the media.

The discussion over the crisis in Belgium has been also reflected in some reactions of the country's immediate neighbours. One of the Francophone politicians said that the French president Sarkozy expressed his interests in the development of the situation in Belgium. What Alwin de Jong, a member of the Christian-Democrat Party (CDA), wrote in an article "Are the Netherlands ready for independent Flanders?" was ironical and sceptical<sup>27</sup>. Geert Wilders from the right-wing PVV (*Partij Van de Vrijheid*) was enthusiastic about this crisis in Belgium. In his interview for "De Telegraaf" he has not seen any problem "in unification of Flanders and the Netherlands in what was called "Neder-Vlaanderen"<sup>28</sup>. Readers of the two biggest dailies in Belgium and in the Netherlands showed that their two countries are not ready for it, although only 53% were against the fusion and 47% in favour.

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<sup>23</sup> "België moet blijven, maar niet zoals nu", *De Standaard Online* 2007, 9-11. <http://destandaard.be>.

<sup>24</sup> "Political crisis pushes Belgium closer to partition". *The Scotsman*. <http://news.scotsman.com>.

<sup>25</sup> "Programma" (PDF). Lijst Dedecker. <http://www.lijstdedecker.com>.

<sup>26</sup> "Manifesto of the Rassemblement Walonie-France (2002)". <http://www.rwf.be>.

<sup>27</sup> Alwin de Jong, Is Nederland klaar voor een onafhankelijk Vlaanderen? "De Standard" 2007, 13 XI.

<sup>28</sup> Marc Reynebeau, "De taal was zelden", „De Standard" 2008, 13 V.

### 3.1. Consequences of splitting

If it comes to splitting of the BHV electoral district, the Halle-Vilvoorde electoral area would merge with the Leuven electoral area and form a provincial constituency in Flemish-Brabant. Inhabitants of Halle-Vilvoorde, no matter whether they are French-speaking or Dutch speaking, would lose the possibility to vote for politicians from Brussels during the federal elections. In practice, this means:

1) that French-speaking parties of HV would need to form one francophone list to be able to gain a seat in the federal parliament, and that French-speaking politicians from Brussels would lose votes that they would otherwise gain in the Flemish periphery of Brussels,

2) that Dutch-speaking parties in Brussels would need to form one Flemish list to be able to gain a seat in the federal parliament, and that Dutch-speaking politicians in HV would lose votes that they would otherwise gain in Brussels,

3) splitting BHV could have negative effects for the safety in the area, since criminals based in Brussels (who are mostly French-speaking) often act in the Dutch-speaking area around it, who would have to be judged in Dutch-speaking courts<sup>29</sup>.

## 4. OTHER SCENARIOS

**Partition of Belgium**, or the dissolution of the Belgian state through the separation of the Dutch-speaking peoples of the Flanders region from the French-speaking peoples of the Walloon region. Optional solutions, such as granting them either independence or respective accession to the Netherlands and France, has been raised in recent discussions in the Belgian and international media<sup>30</sup>. In this kind of scenario the status of Brussels in a partitioned Belgium is unknown and is not a matter of serious political debate.

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<sup>29</sup> “Splitsing B-H-V is cadeau voor criminelen”, “Knack” 2009, 03-05: <http://knack.rnews.be/nl>.

<sup>30</sup> “Belgium faces a crisis” (PDF). *New York Times*. <http://query.nytimes.com>; “Belgium may separate” (PDF). *The New York Times*, <http://query.nytimes.com>.



On 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2007, the Federal Parliament rejected the consideration of a proposed resolution to dissolve Belgium<sup>31</sup>. The resolution had been introduced on October 29 by the representatives of Vlaams Belang, who called upon the federal government to “take without delay the measures necessary for the purpose of preparing the break-up of the Belgian State, so the three communities – Flemings, Walloons and Germans – can go their own separate ways”<sup>32</sup>. Most Flemish parties voted against the consideration of the proposal<sup>33</sup>. The three members of the New-Flemish Alliance, together with three members of CD&V, have abstained<sup>34</sup>.

**City-state scenario.** In political debate some politicians came up with an idea to change Brussels into a “European [capital] district”, similar to Washington D.C. or the Australian Capital Territory, which would be run by the EU rather than Flanders or Wallonia. To make this into a workable solution, Brussels would turn into an independent city-state, which could join the EU on equal footing with other EU member states. Such a status of Brussels as a “city-state” has been suggested by Charles Picqué, Minister-President of the Brussels-Capital Region<sup>35</sup>. European Union bodies have not paid much attention to the Belgian issue<sup>36</sup> leaving solution of the problem to the local politicians. The commonly shared view is that the diversity of Brussels and its significant economic and geopolitical importance in the Western hemisphere as the headquarters of the European and NATO rule out partition of Belgium for the foreseeable future.

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<sup>31</sup> “Kamer stemt splitsingsvoorstel België weg”, “De Standaard Online”, <http://destandaard.be>.

<sup>32</sup> “Proposal of Resolution to break-up the Belgian State with a view to granting independence to the sovereign Flemish and Walloon peoples” (in Dutch and French) (PDF). Belgian Chamber of Representatives. November 6, 2007.

<http://www.dekamer.be>.

<sup>33</sup> “Separatist motion rejected”, *Vlaamse Radio- en Televisieomroep* 2007, 11-22. <http://www.vrtnieuws.net/cm/flandersnews.be>.

<sup>34</sup> “Kamer stemt Vlaams Belang-voorstel weg”, *Vrtnieuws.net* 2007, 11-22. [http://www.vrtnieuws.net/cm/vrtnieuws.net/nieuws/politiek/071122\\_voorstel\\_weggestemd](http://www.vrtnieuws.net/cm/vrtnieuws.net/nieuws/politiek/071122_voorstel_weggestemd).

<sup>35</sup> Van Parijs, Philippe, “Brussels after Belgium: fringe town or city state?” (PDF), *The Bulletin* 2007, 10-4, <http://www.uclouvain.be>.

<sup>36</sup> Feki, Donya, “Jean Quatremer: a nation has been born – Flanders”, *Café Babel* 2007, 11-29. <http://www.cafebabel.com>.

**Extension of Brussels.** One of the realistic ways to avoid splitting-up of Belgium is an extension of the Brussels Capital Region into the surrounding municipalities within the Flemish Brabant and Walloon Brabant arrondissements. These wealthy areas, with their 1.5 million inhabitants, airport and forest within its boundaries make the city financially viable as an independent state. Extensions of Brussels would make it three or four times larger than the current capital region. As an effect of such an extension, Brussels would have all assets to claim her position of the capital of the European Union<sup>37</sup>. Such an option, that is the enlargement of the Brussels capital region, has a strong support of many French-speakers in the Flemish municipalities with facilities for French-speakers surrounding Brussels. All Flemish political parties reject such an extension of the bilingual region.

## 5. PRALINES DIVORCE, OR WILL BELGIUM SURVIVE?<sup>38</sup>

Politicians and political parties debated in 2005 over the future of Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde electoral district. The following compromise has been reached:

1. The BHV electoral district could be joined to the neighbouring Flemish electoral district of Leuven, allowing greater numbers of Dutch speakers a vote in a combined Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde-Leuven district.

2. In return for leaving BHV in its current state, one might accomplish Flemish demands for specific powers currently under Federal jurisdiction to be conferred to the Regions.

11<sup>th</sup> May 2005 was a deadline, by which time a decision was to be reached, but this date has expired without satisfactory solution. The Prime Minister requested a vote of confidence from the parliament<sup>39</sup>. The Parliament supported the government on Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2005 and the issue was put on hold until the next general election of 10<sup>th</sup> June 2007. Two years later, on 7<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Van Parijs, Philippe, "Brussels after Belgium: fringe town or city state?" (PDF). *The Bulletin* 2007, 10-4. <http://www.uclouvain.be>.

<sup>38</sup> This term has appeared in the Polish edition of "Newsweek": "Pralinkowe królestwo, Czy Belgia trafi do podręczników historii jako największa pomyłka nowożytnej Europy? Walonowie i Flamandowie usilnie nad tym pracują". [Pralines Kingdom. Will Belgium Go Down in the History Books as the Biggest Mistake of Modern Times? Walloons and Flemings work hard on it] [http://www.newsweek.pl/artykuly/pralinkowe-krolestwo,7902,2,04 grudnia 2007 17:02,](http://www.newsweek.pl/artykuly/pralinkowe-krolestwo,7902,2,04%20grudnia%202007%2017:02)

<sup>39</sup> "B-H-V begraven", "De Standaard" 2005, 11-05. <http://www.standaard.be>.

November 2009, the Flemish-speaking parties voted at the Committee on the Interior of the Chamber of Representatives for the disentanglement, while the French-speaking parties refused to vote on that motion and left the room<sup>40</sup>. All representatives of the Flemish parties voted in favour of the split of the BHV electoral district, with the exception of Groen!, who abstained.

The transitional period of the interim Government came to an end on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2008. The new Flemish President of the Constitutional Court Marc Bossuyt has stated that future federal elections (i.e. after 2007) would be deemed “unconstitutional” if a legal arrangement for Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde had not been put in place by then<sup>41</sup>. According to Article 65 of the Belgian Constitution, the Federal Parliament ends its term after four years, which automatically leads to new federal elections within 40 days<sup>42</sup>. This means the next federal elections were scheduled for 2011. In April 2010, the Flemish liberals VLD withdrew from the government because no solution was found for the problem of BHV at the agreed upon date, therefore causing the collapse of the Leterme II Government. Consequently, new general elections were scheduled for June 2010<sup>43</sup>. These general elections and the next government will have to work hard to find a solution for BHV. The recent winner of the elections, N-VA, has become the largest and the strongest party of Flanders and Belgium. Splitting of BHV without any concessions for French speakers, and the confederation of Belgium, is one of top issues of N-VA’s agenda. Time will tell in which direction the situation will develop. The Kingdom of Belgium is not the same after April of 2010, due to this problem.

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<sup>40</sup> “Kamercommissie keurt splitsing B-H-V goed”, „brusselnieuws” 2007, 11-07, <http://www.brusselnieuws.be>.

<sup>41</sup> “Verkiezingen 2009 ongrondwettelijk zonder oplossing BHV”, “De Morgen” 2007, 11-13. <http://www.demorgen.be/Verkiezingen-2009-ongrondwettelijk-zonder-oplossing-BHV.dhtml>.

“Zonder oplossing bhv geen grondwettelijke verkiezingen”, “De Standard online” 2007,11-13.

<http://www.standaard.be>.

<sup>42</sup> “Normale verkiezingsdatum en vervroegde verkiezingen”, FPS Interior Belgium-Directorate of Elections. 2007-04-10. <http://www.ibz.rrn.fgov.be>.

<sup>43</sup> “CD&V: Open VLD stelde onmogelijke deadline”, “deredactie.be” (VRT nieuws) 2010, 04-26. <http://www.deredactie.be>.

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**REGION**  
*and*  
**REGIONALISM**

No 10

## **HISTORICAL REGION OF LUXEMBOURG IN THE STRUCTURES OF EUROPEAN UNION**

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, just like Andorra, Lichtenstein, San Marino and the Channel Islands, belongs to the relics of European feudal system. Despite such genesis, at the same time Luxembourg remains a modern Western European country with a very high standard of living. The complex history of Luxembourg resulted in the fact, that the Grand Duchy is just a part of historical region of Luxembourg divided into four countries – Luxembourg, Germany, Belgium and France (Margue 1979, p. 53). Physiographically, although small in size (2586 km<sup>2</sup>), Luxembourg is nowadays a very diverse country. The northern part, called Ösling, is a mountainous area of the Ardennes, while the south (Gutland) belongs to Lorraine Plateau, with much milder land relief, covered with deep valleys of the rivers Sauer, Clerve, Moselle and Alzette.

Historically, the territory of Luxembourg colonized by the Celtic Treveri tribe, was part of Roman province of Belgica in Gaul since year 53 BC (Piotrowicz, 1985, p. 10–11; Łaptos, 2001, p. 412). The centre of the province was based in Augusta Treverorum (nowadays city of Trier in Germany, located 21 km from Luxembourg's border) (Łaptos, 2002, p. 156). After Roman administrative reforms of Diocletian, the lands of Luxembourg together with fragments of the present Lorraine were incorporated in Belgica Prima province. The River Rhine was a border between the Roman Empire and Agri Decumates (the Alemanni tribe) (Łaptos, 1995, p. 13). However, apart from three major roads, which crossed the lands of Luxembourg, the Romans did not erect any major towns and their main centres were located in nearby Trier and Metz (Divodorum) (Margue, 1979, p. 3). Since 407, after five centuries of Roman rule, the Frankish influences were beginning to emerge in the historical lands of Luxembourg, especially during the rule of

Clovis I (481–511), when the locals were converted to Christianity (Łaptos, 2002, p. 156). Since 555, these lands became part of the Frankish Kingdom, as Austrasia. This time period left a strong influence in this area, as the Franks introduced their own language (*moselfränkisch*) in the eastern part of Luxembourg lands, while the western lands still used Romanic dialects (Walloon) (Łaptos, 2001, p. 412). This historical border was used in 1839 to separate Romanic language-speaking people from the German-speaking inhabitants and nowadays forms the western border of the Grand Duchy (Treffers-Daller and Willemyns, 2002, p. 5; Szul, 2009, p. 203).

After the breaking of the Frankish state in 843, by the power of Treaty of Verdun, the historical lands of Luxembourg were found in the lands granted to Lothar. It was located in the meridional belt, ranging from the North Sea to the Mediterranean and together with Lorraine later became part of the Kingdom of Italy, as *Francia media*. However, it was a temporary state of affairs and as a result of further division of Frankish legacy between the sons of Lothar, a new, separate land was established – the so-called Great Lorraine stretching from Friesland to Burgundy, where the lands of Luxembourg were situated (Łaptos, 2002, p. 159). This was one of Europe's vulnerable geopolitical spots and soon became a cause for conflict between European superpowers, lasting until the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Łaptos, 2001, p. 413; 2002, p. 159).

Further fights among Lothar's descendants led to subsequent divisions, where the land of Lorraine embraced a relatively small area, which is still within its borders nowadays. In 870, by the power of the Treaty of Meersen, the present area of Luxembourg was divided along the Meuse and Ourthe rivers, with German rule in the east and Lorraine domain in the west. This division was also visible in the historical area of Luxembourg (Łaptos, 2002, p. 159). Such division did not last long, as in 925 the Treaty of Verdun transferred the entire Lorraine under eastern Frankish rule (German). However, it was a first indication that these lands were becoming a space of a centuries-long rivalry between the neighbouring countries (Margue, 1979, p. 12). Lorraine kept some of its autonomy, but in 959 the province was divided into two separate units – Upper Lorraine subject to bishopric of Trier and Lower Lorraine subject to bishopric of Liege. This division was at the cost of historical lands of Luxembourg, and this time was performed along the parallels (Łaptos, 2002, p. 159).

Luxembourg, as a spatial entity, did not exist at that time, but the division of Lorraine was its starting point. In 959, by the order of Bruno the Archbishop of Cologne (Emperor's brother), Upper Lorraine, was given to

Duke Frederick of Lorraine who already ruled over Duchies of Bar and Metz (Łaptos, 2002, p. 160). One of the new ruler's brothers, Adalberon, was already the Bishop of Metz. The other brother, Siegfried, was to become a key figure in the history of Luxembourg and the founder of the state and nation. R. Szul (2009, p. 28) even associates the origin of the Luxembourg nation with Siegfried and considers this figure to be the main factor for the genesis of the nation.

Year 963 is the key date in the history of Luxembourg. It was a year, when Siegfried (Sigefroi de Arras) purchased a small castle, located on top of the hill called Lucilinburhuc on the Alzette River, from the Benedictine Abbey of Saint-Maximin in Trier. It was purchased on Palm Sunday in exchange for Feulen properties, in the Echternach area. It was not long, until Siegfried received proper documents from the Archbishop Bruno, signed by the Duke of Upper Lorraine, confirming his right of ownership. These documents are nowadays considered to be the founding acts of Luxembourg, although no such information can be found on their pages. Formally, the rulers were titled the Counts of Ardennes. Still, the County of Luxembourg is dated from 17<sup>th</sup> April 963.

Without a shadow of a doubt, the location of the castle was strategic and full of advantages. It was surrounded by a river valley from three sides and allowed to control the Roman tract of Reims-Arlon. The site was fortified in 987 and a town started to emerge in its surroundings. Siegfried's properties were also expanded with the Echternach Abbey in 979. The success of Siegfried's dynasty and the House of Luxembourg brought successful marriages to Siegfried's children in years 995–1000 and gave them the titles of Dukes of Bavaria and subsequently, the Emperors (Łaptos, 2002, p. 161). Apart from Bavaria and Carinthia, they also ruled Lower Lorraine.

However, the first territorial successes of the Luxembourgers were not too durable. In 1136, the County of Luxembourg, along with counties of Namur, Laroche and Durbuy, went under the rule of County of Hainaut (nowadays in southern Belgium). Later, Luxembourg entered a personal union with the County of Bar (Bar-le-Duc) until 1214 and the country went under the rule of Limburg (Łaptos, 2002, p. 163; 2001, p. 413). These changes were related to the subsequent marriages of Luxembourgian Countess Ermesinda, who in this way managed to unite the lands of Luxembourg, expanding it to an area which endured until the future division in 1839. Back in these days, the area of the county stretched between Hohes Venn, Metz, Saarland and the Ardennes. Apart from the Luxembourg itself, it also comprised Namur counties of La Roche and Durbuy, as well as Marquisate of Arlon. In 1226,

after death of her another husband, Ermesinda took over the rule as the Countess of Luxembourg and Marquise of Arlon. What is important, her marriages expanded Luxembourg only with Romanic regions, which brought the popularity of French language. The next ruler expanded Luxembourg's area with the County of Vianden, Marquisate of Arrancy and seniorities of Ambleve, Saint Vith and d'Aywaile. In 1308, his son was elected the King of Germany as Henry VII and was crowned the Holy Roman Emperor in 1312 (he only ruled one year as an Emperor) (Łaptos, 2001, p. 413). The Luxembourg castle, which was selected as the county seat in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, was gradually surrounded with a city and city walls, with area of 5 ha within its borders. In 14<sup>th</sup> century, it was populated by approximately 5 thousand inhabitants (Łaptos, 2002, p. 164).

This first success of the Luxembourgian dynasty paved the way for their territorial expansion in Central Europe. It was a good choice, as the 14<sup>th</sup> century brought the period of the highest prosperity to Luxembourg in its entire history. Similar way had been already chosen by the Habsburgs, who expanded from Alsace and Switzerland to Austria and Styria.

By 1310, Luxembourg held the crown of Bohemia (John the Blind, in 1310–1335 also a titular King of Poland). The rulers of Luxembourg took over the Silesian counties from the Piast dynasty (until 1368) and in years 1346–1437 they took the German crown and also ruled the area from Antwerp to Brussels. Since 1387, they were the kings of Hungary and since 1373 – Electors of Brandenburg and New March (reaching as far as Wałcz). During the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, they frequently held the title of the Holy Roman Emperor. Thanks to one of the Emperors, Charles IV (1346–1378), in 1354 Prague became the first academic city in this part of Europe and in 1354 Luxembourg itself was raised to the rank of Duchy (Łaptos, 2002, p. 169). The Duchy of Luxembourg under the rule of Duke Wenceslas I (in years 1354–1387) expanded with the lands of Brabant, Limburg, Marquisate of Antwerp, County of Chiny (in 1364, thus the double title of Dukes of Luxembourg and Counts of Chiny) as well as lands of Schoenecken, Koenigsmacher, Valkenburg, Herbeumont and Masson. Moreover, the County of Nassau-Vianden remained a fief to the Duchy. At that time, Luxembourg achieved the peak of its territorial development, comprising lands from Schleiden (near Malmedy, nowadays in Belgium) in the north to the outskirts of Metz (nowadays Alsace) in the south and from Sedan in the west to Saarland in the east, with the total area of over 10 km<sup>2</sup>, which is four times as large as the current area of the Grand Duchy (Łaptos, 2002, p. 171).

The heyday of the House of Luxembourg was brought to an end by the



heirless (no male successors) death of the Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg in 1437, which ended the rule of Luxembourg dynasty in Germany and in Central Europe (Łaptos, 2002, p. 173). The Luxembourg lands were taken over by the Habsburgs, according to the agreement between both families. The daughter of the late king, Elizabeth, tried to persuade her husband, Duke of Austria, to purchase the Duchy of Luxembourg for 120 thousand florins, but unfortunately he passed away in 1439. The attempts to persuade her son-in-law, Duke of Saxony, also failed – he was not wealthy enough. Ultimately, in 1441, by the power of the Treaty of Hesdin, she sold Luxembourg to Duke of Burgundy for 180 thousand florins and the life pension of 7 thousand florins annually, which resulted in her banishment from the homeland.

Burgundy took the power in Luxembourg on 21<sup>st</sup> November 1443, but it was not until 1482, when Luxembourg along with southern part of the Low Countries were taken over by Austria (the Habsburgs) (Łaptos, 2001, p. 415). Nevertheless, the Duchy kept its administrative autonomy, although it was bound more closely to the Belgian provinces. This relation remained unchanged until 1839 (Łaptos, 2002, p. 174). In 1542, for a short period of time Luxembourg was conquered by France and Francis I was titled the Duke of Luxembourg. This event, however, did not interrupt the process of unification of all the Low Countries. The Treaty of Augsburg, in 1548, proclaimed the Seventeen Provinces as part of the Holy Roman Empire (Łaptos, 2002, p. 181). The Habsburg rule in Austria and Spain resulted in Luxembourg becoming the property of the Spanish branch of this royal dynasty (Köller, 1981, p. 27). The Duchy was still granted administrative and judicial autonomy (Łaptos, 2001, p. 415).

During the Reformation, Luxembourg remained loyal to Catholicism but was later entangled in the Thirty Years' War (since 1635), and the Peace of Westphalia did not end the fighting in Luxembourg. It was not until the Treaty of Pyrenees in 1659, when peace came and the French-Spanish border was changed in a way that Luxembourg itself became divided. The southern part, along with the cities of Thionville, Montmédy, Marville and Yvoix-Carignan were incorporated to France. France acted aggressively and since 1678 occupied two-thirds of Luxembourg's area and in years 1684–1697 – the entire Duchy. However, the rule of Louis XIV brought economic development to Luxembourg, especially in the field of military, including the fortification of the capital city. It was then, when Luxembourg was named "Gibraltar of the North" and became the main raiding outpost for raids on Rheinland (Łaptos, 2001, s. 415).

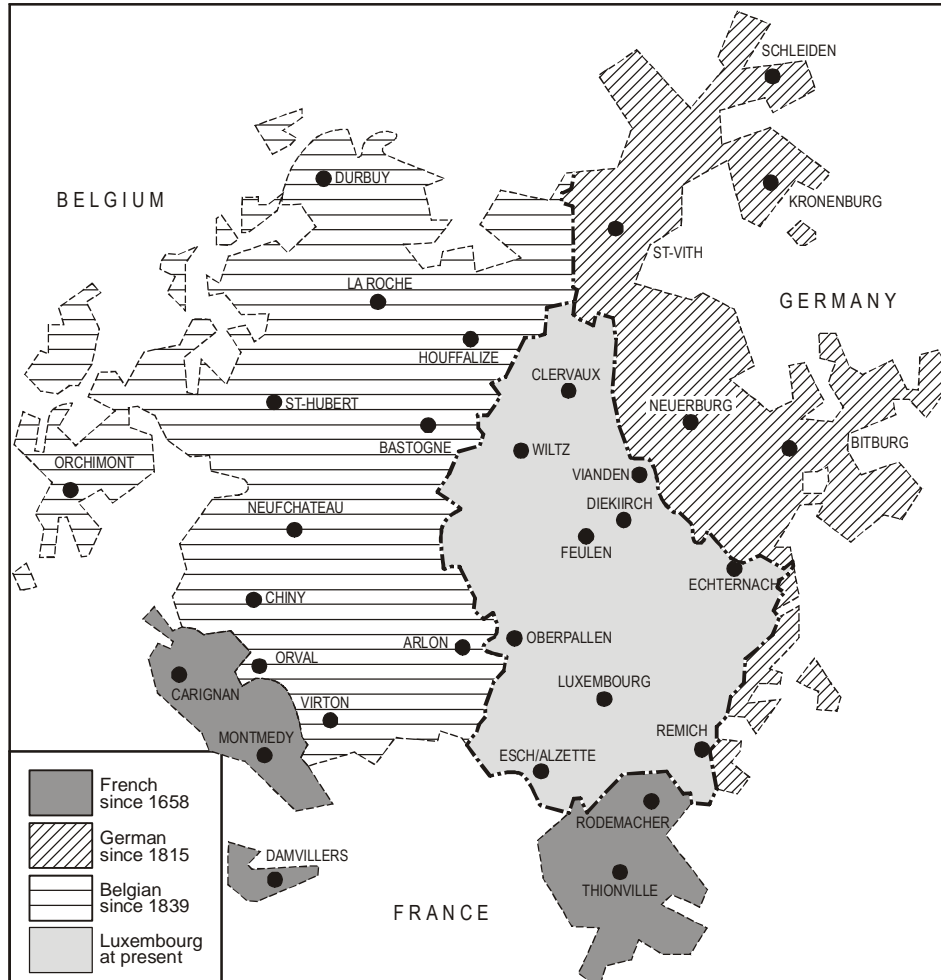


Fig. 1. Dividing of the Luxembourg historical region between Germany, Belgium and France

Source: author's own elaboration

By the power of the Treaty of Rijswijk, on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1697, Luxembourg returned under Spanish rule and remained as such until the treaties of Rastadt (6<sup>th</sup> March 1714) and Antwerp (11<sup>th</sup> November 1715), by the power of which, Luxembourg along with all the Southern Netherlands was transferred to the Austrian Habsburgs. The border fortresses were manned with Dutch and English mercenaries, which greatly burdened the treasury of Luxembourg (Łaptos, 2002, p. 189–191; Margue, 1979, p. 41; Balicki and Bogucka, 1989, p. 190). After the loss of Bavaria, the Habsburgs

tried to compensate the territorial losses by offering Luxembourg in exchange for Salzburg or one of Italian duchies. Maria Theresa even offered Luxembourg to France in exchange for military support against Turkey, which proves that the title of the Duke of Luxembourg was not held in great esteem among the Habsburgs (Łaptos, 2002, p. 194). In 1792, the Luxembourgian border was home to negotiations, which almost led to Austria exchanging Belgian lands for Bavaria. In the end, the second partition of Poland was established, with no involvement on Habsburgs' side.

In 1795, after several months' siege of the Luxembourg fortress, on 1<sup>st</sup> October, the Duchy along with the entire Austrian Netherlands were occupied by the French Republic. The territory of Luxembourg was divided between three French departments. The largest part belonged to Forêts Department (Łaptos, 2001, p. 415). The annexation was formally approved by the Treaty of Campo Formio (1797) (Łaptos, 2002, p. 196). During the Napoleonic rule (1799–1815), Luxembourg remained within the French borders and developed as a metallurgic centre.

After the fall of Napoleon, on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1814, allied troops entered the Duchy. The area east of Meuse along with Liège and the Forêts Department were occupied by Prussian forces. The future fate of the Low Countries was to be decided during the negotiations in Paris and Vienna. Austria did not intend to bring Luxembourg back under its wings, although the expectations of Duchy's community were quite the opposite. England opted for the Low Countries to be transferred to the Dutch, in order to create a safety zone between them and France. The Prussians intended to seize Rhineland, although there were differences between the military leaders and the politicians. The former intended to capture the entire area, while the latter preferred to keep a safety buffer near France, which created an opportunity for Luxembourg to regain independence. Ultimately, Prussia proposed Austria to create a Middle Rheine Country, but after the Habsburgs declined the offer, the Prussians offered Luxembourg to Bavaria in exchange for Mainz (Łaptos, 2002, p. 198). Faced with the protest of the House of Orange-Nassau, based on the secret arrangements of the Paris negotiations, the Prussians seized Luxembourgian regions of Bitburg and Igel on the right bank of Moselle and Ourthe rivers and offered the remaining lands of the Duchy to Holland. Luxembourgian historians call this act "the second partition of Luxembourg". On 16<sup>th</sup> March 1815, William of Orange became the Duke of Luxembourg (Balicki and Bogucka, 1989, p. 305).

As a result of the Treaty of Vienna of 9<sup>th</sup> June 1815, Luxembourg was raised to the rank of the Grand Duchy in personal union with the Nether-

lands, but at the same time it remained part of the German Confederation. Unfortunately, Luxembourg did not regain its lands lost to Prussia. It was compensated with the Bouillon region in Ardennes, which formed a deep wedge in the Belgian part of Luxembourg lands (Łaptos, 2002, p. 199; 2001, p. 415). The Luxembourg keep was manned with Prussians and the Dutch did not even nominate their military governor in the eighteenth province. The monarch did not visit the city of Luxembourg and welcomed the representatives of the Grand Duchy in Arlon or Bouillon. The people of Luxembourg accepted this fact and were happy to avoid the fate of lands annexed to Prussia (Łaptos, 2002, p. 199).

The Belgian revolution against the Orange rule in August and September of 1830 also enveloped the lands of Luxembourg, although the rebels were not too active in this region. The Luxembourg fortress was among the three last ones to surrender to the rebels (Łaptos, 1995, p. 154). Therefore, the Belgian proclamation of independence, proclaimed in Brussels on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1830, formally encompassed Luxembourg as well. During the London Conference, which began on 4<sup>th</sup> November 1830, a truce was forced and Belgium's independence (10<sup>th</sup> November) was acknowledged. This was partly influenced by Russian engagement in suppressing the November Uprising in Poland. During the negotiations on the division of Dutch and Belgian lands, documented in preliminary peace treaty of 26<sup>th</sup> June 1831 and ultimately in the treaty of 14<sup>th</sup> October 1831, the border was established along the line of 1790. The question of Grand Duchy's and Limburg's allegiance was left in the hand of diplomats (Łaptos, 2002, p. 201; Łaptos, 1995, p. 158; Balicki and Bogucka, 1989, p. 313). The Belgians protested against the treaty, demanding Zeeland Flanders, Limburg and Luxembourg. On 1<sup>st</sup> February, Belgian parliament rejected the treaty, which meant more uncertainty of the future fate of Luxembourg. On 26<sup>th</sup> June 1831, it was decided that until further notice, Luxembourg will remain under Belgian military administration (Łaptos, 1995, p. 162). However, after Leopold was elected the King of Belgium, another war against the Netherlands began in August 1831, which led to an almost utter defeat of Belgian forces after a ten-day campaign. Belgium was saved by French and English military intervention. By the power of the London Conference of 14<sup>th</sup> November 1831, not only did Belgium lose the chance for Zeeland Flanders but also had to accept the division of Luxembourg lands. It kept the Walloon part, but had to surrender the Germanic regions of the Grand Duchy to the Netherlands (Łaptos, 1995 p. 163; Łaptos, 2002, p. 201). Similarly, Limburg was divided along the Meuse River. The defeated Belgians had to accept these terms, but

the Dutch rejected them. At that time, Luxembourg was ruled by allied government of General Bernhard of Weimar, who aimed at starting a conflict with the Prussian garrison. Eventually, it led to his escape to the Netherlands. The other part of the country was ruled by the Belgians, who were also causing conflicts with the Dutch military.

The Belgians hoped they would keep the captured lands of Luxembourg and the Dutch wanted to rebuild their former glory after the superpowers would change their minds as expected. Eventually, it was not until 14<sup>th</sup> March 1838, when William of Orange ratified the treaty dividing the Luxembourg lands into Belgian (Walloon) and Dutch (present Grand Duchy) parts. Baron Nothomb managed to secede the Arlon region of Luxembourg, including his family seat, located in Messancy. Luxembourg lost half of its population (175 thousand) and almost two-thirds of its territory (4300 km<sup>2</sup>). Formally, the Treaty of London, which came into force on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1839, guaranteed the autonomy of Luxembourg. In reality, the Dutch wanted to take revenge for people's Belgian sympathies and did not proclaim the promised constitution of Luxembourg. Moreover, they stopped protecting Luxembourg from the subjection to the German Confederation, which led the civil ministry office (Łaptos, 2002, p. 202). The treaty of 1839 is considered by local historians as the "third partition of Luxembourg" (Łaptos, 2001, p. 416).

It was not until the rule of William II, in years 1840–1849, when the cornerstone of Luxembourg's modern statehood was laid. On 12<sup>th</sup> October 1841, the first constitution was proclaimed. It was based on federal rules and national assembly nominated by the Grand Duke. Multiple reforms were also implemented. Much controversy was caused by the customs union with Prussia. The union was supported by the monarch, but most citizens opposed this idea, as it threatened the liberal trade with Belgium. Ultimately, the treaty was ratified on 8<sup>th</sup> February 1842, but Belgium was also given favourable conditions.

Even more important reforms concerned the political issues of the Luxembourgers. On 19<sup>th</sup> April 1848, they were allowed to call National Constituent Assembly and proclaim the new constitution of Luxembourg on 23<sup>rd</sup> April. The new document equalised the Grand Duchy with the Kingdom of Netherlands. First parliamentary elections were also held (Łaptos, 2002, p. 203). The next king of the Netherlands, William III, did not maintain such a liberal approach and nominated his younger brother, Henri, as governor of the Grand Duchy. In 1854, the Luxembourgian parliament was dissolved. Personal liberties were restricted and on 27<sup>th</sup> November 1856 a new

constitution was enforced, introducing the laws of the German Confederation (Łaptos, 2002, p. 204).

Further changes in the status of the Grand Duchy result from the Prussian-Austrian war of 1866 and the Austrian defeat at Sadowa, which shook the balance of power in the entire Europe. In exchange for remaining neutral in this conflict, France hoped for territorial gain. The French mainly aimed at Palatinate of Bavaria and consent for the occupation of Belgium, but for Chancellor Bismarck it was better to hand over Luxembourg to the French. Luxembourg did not intend to join the North German Confederation and thus, had little significance for Prussia (Łaptos, 2002, p. 205). Even the ruler of Luxembourg, William III of the Netherlands, expressed the will to forfeit the Duchy at the compensation of 5 million francs in gold, as he feared to lose Limburg to the Prussians and hoped for an alliance with France. The Luxembourgers were entitled to a plebiscite, whether they would rather join France of the North German Confederation. The transfer was supposed to take place on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1867, but Duke Henri opposed, hoping for full independence of Luxembourg. The transfer would most likely lead to war between Prussia and France and the French hoped for the Prussian garrison to be at least withdrawn from the Grand Duchy. Austria and Russia, on the other hand, suggested Luxembourg's union with Belgium in return for Belgian Mariembourg and Phillippeville regions being transferred to France. Belgium did not approve this idea. France's weakness and Prussia's aggressive stance did not present an optimistic forecast for Luxembourg, although the Dutch governor, Duke Henri, actively promoted the idea of statehood and independence of the Grand Duchy (Łaptos, 2002, p. 205).

Finally, the Prussians were persuaded to participate in an international conference in London. On 11<sup>th</sup> May 1867, article 2 of the conference, proclaimed independence, lifetime neutrality and demilitarization of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, guaranteed by Austria, Prussia, France, Russia and Great Britain, within the borders set on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1839 (Łaptos, 2002, p. 203). Luxembourg became an open city and the fortifications were demolished. The new, independent constitution of the Grand Duchy was proclaimed on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1868 (*The Constitution...*, 1976). After William III died in 1890, the male Dutch line of the Orange dynasty ceased to exist. He was succeeded by Adolph of Nassau, which meant the end of a personal union with the Netherlands and the beginning of the Luxembourgian ruling dynasty. As Luxembourg gained independence, the south of the country underwent intense industrialization, based on steel industry. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, this resulted in Luxembourg being one of the top six industrial

superpowers in the world (Łaptos, 2002, p. 207). The government of the Grand Duchy actively participated in international affairs and was among the authors of the Hague Conventions, regulating international law.

Unfortunately, the neutrality of Luxembourg did not outlast the greatest conflict of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. On 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1914, German troops invaded the Grand Duchy. Despite the occupation, the government still operated and it was not until June 1915, when Germany finally declared the territory of Luxembourg as the theatre of war. The Germans left the Grand Duchy the same day as the day when Poland regained its independence (11<sup>th</sup> November 1918), but they were replaced by the allied forces (mainly the French). There was also a change on the throne, as the Grand Duchess, accused of collaboration with the Germans, had to abdicate and was replaced by her sister (Łaptos, 2002, p. 210; 2001, p. 417). The Western Europe was not too eager to restore diplomatic relations with the Grand Duchy. Luxembourg, just like many other European countries, also experienced attempts of the Bolshevik coups. Attempts were made at establishing a socialist republic (Łaptos, 2002, p. 210). First such attempt was made during the occupation, on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1918, the second – on the day of German withdrawal. However, it was the third attempt that was the most spectacular, when on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1919, a group of members of parliament proclaimed the end of monarchy and established Committee of Public Safety, announcing it as a republican government of Luxembourg. The following day, the French military dispersed this Soviet dummy government.

Luxembourg was not invited to the Paris Peace Conference and did not participate in the creation of the Treaty of Versailles, but its statehood was not endangered in the light of Wilson's theses. The treaty confirmed Luxembourg's statehood and rendered its entire past links to Germany undone. Most of all, on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1919, the customs union with Germany was cancelled. Because the political situation of the country was not clear, on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1919, a political referendum was conducted, where 77.8% voted for the monarchy to remain and 70% chose a customs union with France (the remaining 30% opted for Belgium). The problem was, France preferred to maintain good relations with Belgium and did not agree to the union with Luxembourg. Finally, on 25<sup>th</sup> July 1922, the Grand Duchy signed an economic union with Belgium for the next 50 years to come, at the same time starting the economic integration of Europe (the union later transformed into Benelux) (Łaptos, 2002, p. 212; Köller, 1981, p. 28). The subsequent treaties tightened cooperation with Belgium in terms of monetary issues and railroad transportation. In 1923, Luxembourg's economy began to develop

rapidly again. In 1920, despite its neutral status, Luxembourg was accepted to the League of Nations (Łaptos, 2001, p. 417). The Locarno Treaties were also politically favourable for Luxembourg, as well as the Rhine Treaty, although the Grand Duchy was not one of its relevant parties. The government of Luxembourg took active part in peacekeeping activities, e.g. as one of the first signees of the Kellogg-Briand Pact. As the League of Nations grew weaker, Luxembourg began closer cooperation with the so-called Oslo Group, which comprised neutral Scandinavian countries, Belgium and the Netherlands. The group proposed mediations on the day, when the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact was signed.

Similarly to the first global conflict, the neutrality of Luxembourg was violated during the World War II, when Nazi troops entered its territory on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1940. The French army took positions in the south of Luxembourg, but the clash never took place, as the Nazis planned to attack France from the Belgian territory. The government of Luxembourg had surrendered before its own battalion was even formed. The Grand Duchess, remembering her sister's experience, decided to immigrate to Portugal, and one month later left to the USA. However, the government-in-exile decided that Canada is the right place for the Grand Duchess to go and eventually she settled in Montreal. On 14<sup>th</sup> August 1940, Luxembourg was annexed directly to Nazi Germany, which met passive resistance of its citizens, such as wearing symbols of independence. On the other hand, a collaborative political party, controlled by the Nazi, was also established.

Luxembourg's government-in-exile was still active on the international field and even filed a proposal of a post-war new order in their region (Jean-Louis Ensch's project), suggesting a confederation of Lorraine countries, comprising Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland and new countries of Alsace, Lorraine, Baden, Rhineland, Saarland and Palatinate. The country, 165 thousand km<sup>2</sup> in size, would have approximately 30 million inhabitants (where Germans would constitute only 25%). The aim of this project was to break the territory of Germany and at the same time to integrate the rest of Europe. The occupation of Luxembourg ended on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1944, when American troops entered its territory (Łaptos, 2002, p. 220). Three days later, accompanied by British army, Luxembourgian dignitaries returned from exile. Among them was Grand Duchess's husband and Duke Jean – the successor to the throne as well as the government. However, the Nazi counter strike in the Ardennes resulted in occupation of southern Luxembourg. The liberation came again in February 1945 and the Grand Duchess Charlotte finally returned to the capital city.



The destruction caused by war in Luxembourg was significant, especially in regions of Echternach, Vianden and Ösling. The country lost approx. 30% of its buildings and 5.7 thousand people, which makes Luxembourg a country with the second largest amount of casualties among the Western European countries (Łaptos, 2002, p. 221). As far as the German issue was concerned, Luxembourg supported the idea of Germany's federalization, its limited independence and the international control of the Ruhr region. Luxembourg demanded 6 billion dollars of compensation for war losses and on 27<sup>th</sup> November 1946 issued a memorandum with territorial demands, addressed to the allied superpowers. The Grand Duchy demanded the control over railway on the German bank of the Moselle River as well as the area needed to build a dam on the Ourthe River, thus a total control of the Sauer and Moselle Rivers' tributaries. Luxembourg also wanted to gain right to coal mining in the mines of the Aachen Basin and to be granted the supplies of German coking coal during the period of 40 years in volumes of 3.5 million tonnes annually. It was related to the Nordstern mine in the Enschweiler-Bergwerksverein enclave, where Luxembourgian investments were made back in the interwar period. Eventually, these demands were not met.

It was back during the war, on 5<sup>th</sup> September 1944, when Luxembourgian government-in-exile signed an economic union treaty with Belgium and the Netherlands. After the war, the Belgium-Luxembourg Economic Union (UEBL) was reactivated and on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1948, Luxembourg joined the economic union called Benelux. Conclusions were drawn from the double violation of Luxembourg's neutrality and in May 1948, records concerning lifetime neutrality of the Grand Duchy were removed from the constitution (*The Constitution...*, 1976) and Luxembourg co-signed the collective, self-defence Treaty of Brussels (17<sup>th</sup> March 1948) and in 1949 – NATO, which ensured the protection of its independence (Łaptos, 2001, p. 418; 2002, p. 224).

On 26<sup>th</sup> March 1949, Luxembourg expanded its territory by 550 ha in Vianden Canton, by annexing a German (Rhineland-Palatinate) village of Roth an der Our, along with its 150 inhabitants. The village was returned in 1959 in exchange for war reparations (Łaptos, 2002, p. 223).

Luxembourg remained active on the international field after Second World War. It was among the founding members of the United Nations. The Grand Duchy also benefited from the Marshall Plan and its economy transformed from intensive industrialization to an open approach to global economy. Luxembourg joined European Economic Community and was a founding member of the Council of Europe (1949) as well as the European

Coal and Steel Committee (1951). It was particularly strategic to join the common market of coal and steel, when steel industry generated 88% of the country's revenue from export, the earnings were up to 40% higher and the strategic decisions were to be made among all the pact members. The large German market opened to Luxembourg, which was another reason for joining. Luxembourg received 5% seats in the General Assembly, although its population constituted only 0.2% of all member states. Finally, the seat of this institution was established in Luxembourg's capital city. The Grand Duchy signed the Treaty of Rome, establishing European Community in 1957, and participated in its transformation into the European Union in 1993 (Łaptos, 2001, p. 418; 2002, p. 226). Since May 1996, Luxembourg participates in Eurocorps with a battalion of 800 soldiers.

The economy of Luxembourg, still based on steel industry after World War II, went through the same transitions as the heavy industry of all western countries, which was related to the end of arms race and the demand for steel. It was back in the 1960s, when the industrial production and transport infrastructure were restructured. The Findel Airport became an international transit terminal and motorway and railway networks covered Luxembourg. Power industry was modernized, based on hydroelectric plants. Machine, automotive and electrical industries, but mostly services, including international financial services, became the key development areas of Luxembourg's economy. Along with economic conversion, came legal changes and liberalization of the market as well as an open approach to international and transnational cooperation.

Luxembourg does not fear the change of its borders due to the articles of the Helsinki Accords (1975). On 24<sup>th</sup> May 1989, there was an exchange of borderland areas with France, in order to improve the communication in Luxembourg. 7893 m<sup>2</sup> of French area (Volmerange Commune), neighbouring the Luxembourgian city of Dudelange, were incorporated to the Grand Duchy, as the city developed to a point, where its limits nearly reached the national border (the city centre is located 2 km away from the border). In exchange, Luxembourg transferred an equal plot of land within the same region to France (*Agreement...*, 1989).

Luxembourg has always played a far more significant role, than it would result from its economic or territorial potential. In 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, the power over many European countries resided within its borders. Similar situation could be witnessed after World War II. Luxembourg became home to European Coal and Steel Committee – the forerunner of the European Economic Community. The city of Luxembourg was a serious candidate for

the capital of the united Europe (next to Brussels and Strasbourg). Luxembourg is also home to Kirchberg European Centre (*Le Centre...*, 1967), where different European administrative, political, scientific and economic entities hold meetings and conferences. Luxembourg also hosts the European Court of Justice, European Investment Bank and European Court of Auditors, as well as the Secretariat of the European Parliament and institutions of the European Commission.

On 14<sup>th</sup> June 1985, in a small town of Schengen, located on the tripoint of Luxembourgian, French and German borders, a famous agreement was signed, lifting the borders between member countries of the EU, who signed the agreement.

The local Radio Luxembourg, founded in 1924, also achieved a high status. It became an international station in 1933, broadcasting longwave programmes in multiple languages (French, English, German and occasionally Polish). The station, based in Junglinster and later in Marnach, was well received in large part of Europe and played a major political and cultural part during the cold war period. In the 1960s, it literally became a symbol of pop music.

The international significance of Luxembourg is also reflected in the fact, that an average inhabitant of the Grand Duchy is statistically Europe's biggest polyglot (speaks 5 languages on average). Next to Luxembourgish language, French and German languages are also commonly known and English and Dutch languages are spoken by many. Due to a large number of immigrants, Portuguese and Italian languages are also popular. According to R. Szul, the use of French language in the official documents in Luxembourg is a remainder of this language's former global importance. The Luxembourgers are actually closer to German language, not to speak of Luxembourgish itself (Szul, 209, p. 46, 60, 63, 173).

Considering both, the area size and the number of inhabitants (502 thousand in 2010), the Grand Duchy qualifies as a very small country. It is also an inland country. It is ranked as the 166<sup>th</sup> largest territory and the 169<sup>th</sup> population in the world. Surrounded by two huge neighbours (France and Germany) and Belgium it has an extremely disadvantageous political pressure index (188.74), which is made up of a slightly better territorial pressure index (148.92) and significantly worse demographic pressure index (228.55) (Sobczyński, 2006, p. 205).

Such a modest position of Luxembourg in the ranking of countries' size is not reflected in other rankings. It has a GDP of 52.4 billion USD, which is a 67<sup>th</sup> result in the world (better than Belarus or Bulgaria) (2009 World Bank

data). It is \$105.3 thousand per capita and the highest score in the world with Norway coming second with only \$79 thousand! Other rankings also place Luxembourg relatively high. The standard of living measured in HDI (Human Development Index) places Luxembourg as 11<sup>th</sup> country in the world (2009) with the score of 0.960, just behind Japan, but in front of Finland and USA. Considering the index of economic freedom, Luxembourg comes 14<sup>th</sup> (75.4). In all the rankings of economic, political or religious freedom, the Grand Duchy is in the leading group of absolutely free and fully democratic countries. Despite the fact, that the Luxembourgers are only a slight majority in their own country (immigrants constitute 43% of the total population; the largest minority groups are: the Portuguese – 37%, the French – 14%, the Italians – 9%, the Belgians – 8%, the Germans – 6%), there is no such thing as xenophobia in Luxembourg.

Luxembourg, being a historical region of the medieval Europe, has become a model example of a multicultural region of the united Europe. The tendencies to recreate Luxembourg within its historical borders can only be observed in the euroregional policy of the Grand Duchy, as since 1995, Luxembourg, as a whole, is a member of the Saar-Lor-Lux-Rhin Euroregion, which comprises neighbouring administrative units of Belgium (Luxembourg province and German-speaking regions of Eupen-Malmedy), Germany (Saarland and regions of Trier, Birkenfeld and Western Palatinate in Rhineland-Palatinate) and France (Lorraine). Its entire area is similar, if not larger, than the area of the 15<sup>th</sup>-century Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

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**REGION**  
*and*  
**REGIONALISM**  
No 10

## **LUSATIA AS A SUBJECT OF HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY RESEARCH**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Lusatia, culturally one of the most interesting regions of Central Europe, has been a point of interest for historical geographers for many years. This is due to both, its complicated past and the present, being the consequence of past events. Lusatia was a sovereign state for only about 100 years in the early Middle Ages. Later it was ruled by the heads of the neighbouring countries, including Bolesław Chrobry, the King of Poland. Throughout its history, Lusatia has changed hands repeatedly, and the neighbouring states annexing the region did not care about preserving its territorial integrity. The indigenous inhabitants of the region – Lusatians (Lusatian Sorbs) were subject to germanization for generations, and their number dwindled as a result. Unfortunately, the process has continued up to now. It has resulted in a systematic decline of the spiritual and material culture of this smallest Slavonic nation.

### **2. LUSATIA AS A HISTORICAL REGION**

As already mentioned, for over 1000 years Lusatia has been a subject of diplomatic disputes and military conflicts between its neighbours. One of the crucial factors facilitating annexation of this region is the lack of precise physical geographical borders. This is particularly noticeable on the western and northern borders of Lusatia. In the early Middle Ages western-Slavonic tribes inhabited Central European territories as far as the rivers Elbe and Saale, as well as the area of present-day Berlin (Kłos, 1994). However, they

were gradually replaced by expansionist and better organized Germanic tribes. Nowadays the southern border of Lusatia could be placed on the southern side of the Lusatian Mountains (in the Czech Republic), and the eastern border – on the Kwisa River and the lower course of the Bóbr River (in Poland). Although these borders are recognizable in space, they are very easy to cross. This permeability of the borders has entailed a risk of invasion on one hand, and it enabled cultural infiltration on the other. As a consequence, today's Lusatia is a multicultural region. It is also difficult to define clearly the border between Upper and Lower Lusatia. In the Middle Ages, the territories later known as Upper Lusatia belonged to the March of Meissen, while the Sorbian March is Lower Lusatia today. In the following centuries, this region was repeatedly occupied and divided by successive rulers (Bohemian, Saxon and Brandenburg), with no regard to this historical division. The only initiative aiming at the unification of Lusatia in the last few centuries has been the unexecuted plan to establish a Lusatian Socialist Soviet Republic (Fig. 1).

Paradoxically the 'artificial' determination of the border after World War II, following the administrative borders of the GDR (it ran across the middle of an open-pit lignite mine) turned out consistent with the actual border that had existed there for a few centuries. After the unification of Germany, this line also became the border between the Lands of Saxony and Brandenburg.

An interesting research issue, one that could be analysed by means of historical geography methods (retrospective – based on data from historical sources, and retrogressive – reconstructing the historical past of a particular region based on field studies) is an attempt to reconstruct the shape of former state borders in this region (Semotanova, 1998). Until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the borderlines in this area were of fairly symbolic character. However, one can reconstruct their shape based on indirect premises. These include the location of churches (especially of minority denominations in a given area), elements of religious “small architecture” (e.g. abbot crosses delimiting the borders of monastery-owned territories or medieval conciliation crosses characteristic of Silesia and Lusatia), the morphology of rural and urban settlements, the character of buildings (especially rural) or the language of inscriptions in public places (e.g. in graveyards, on wayside shrines and crosses).



LUSATIA LUŽICE ŁUŻICA ЛУЖИЦА LUŠACE

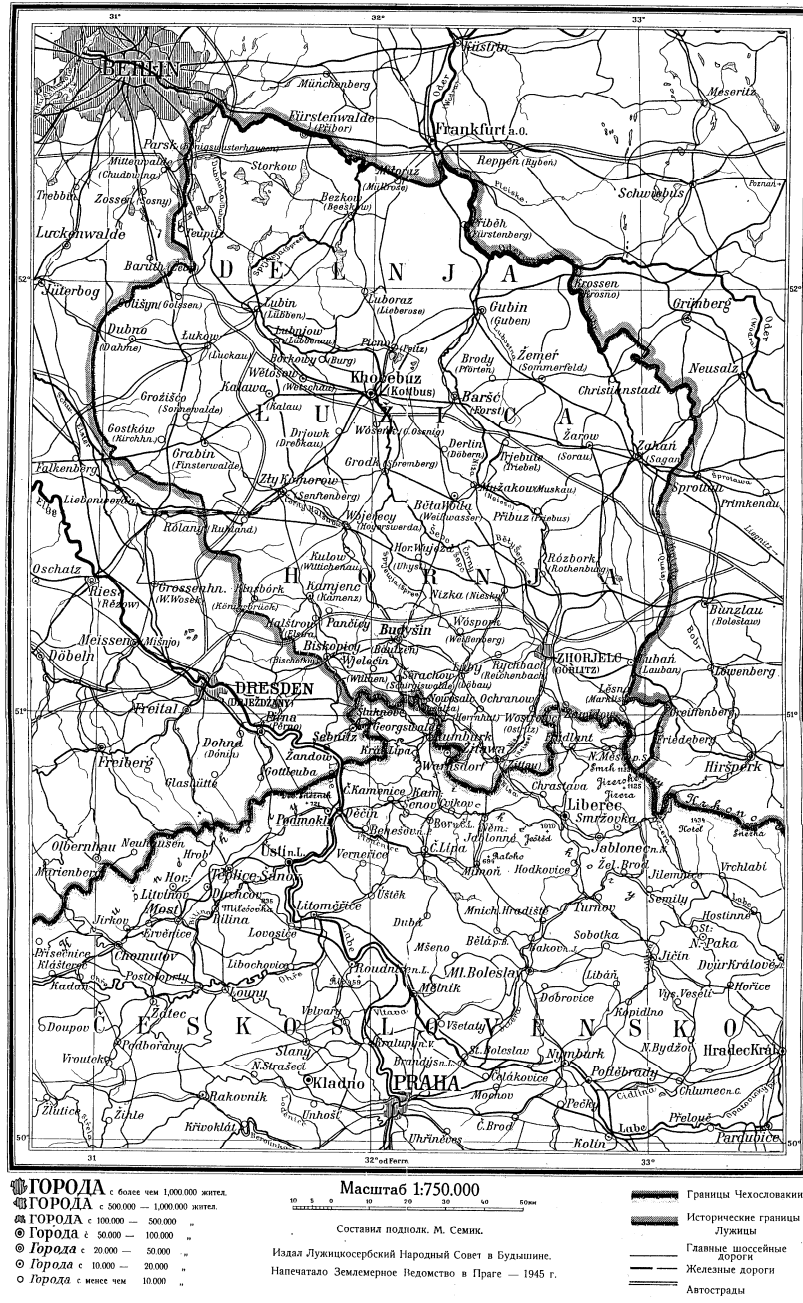


Fig. 1. Map of Lusatia, 1945  
 Source: after: J. Szczepankiewicz-Battek (2005, p. 129)

Table 1. Timeline of Lusatian History

6 <sup>th</sup> century AD	Arrival of Slavic tribes in the territory of today's Lusatia
Until 631	Lusatia ruled by the Franks
631	Prince Derwan incorporates Lusatia into Samo's Realm (territory of today's Bohemia and Moravia)
634/635	Lusatia conquered by Radulf, Duke of Thuringia
806	Prince Miliduch (the founder and leader of Sorbian tribes' union ) dies in the battle on the Elbe – Lusatia conquered by Charlemagne
2 <sup>nd</sup> half of 9 <sup>th</sup> c.	Lusatia under the rule of Great Moravia
907	The fall of Great Moravian state
Until 990	Territories inhabited by Lusatian Sorbs gradually conquered by German dukes
1018–1025	Meissen, the Milceni region and Lusatia ruled by Bolesław Chrobry
1031	Poland ultimately loses Lusatia; the Milceni territory (today's Upper Lusatia) incorporated into the March of Meissen , Lusatia (today's Lower Lusatia) – into the Saxon Eastern March (later it became a separate Lusatian march)
1211–1224	The Lusatian March, including the Lubusz Lands, is ruled by Henry the Bearded of Silesia. Later, a part of Upper Lusatia is temporarily ruled by Henry I of Jawor and Bolko II of Świdnica
1368	Upper and Lower Lusatia included in the Bohemian Kingdom
Late 15 <sup>th</sup> c.	The Hohenzollerns of the Brandenburg capture part of Lower Lusatia (around Cottbus )
1635	Upper and most of Lower Lusatia (except the Cottbus district) included in Saxony
1807	Treaties of Tilsit award the Cottbus district to the Kingdom of Saxony (dependent on Napoleon)
1815	Congress of Vienna resolves to give all Lower and 2/3 of Upper Lusatia to the Kingdom of Prussia
1867	Saxony annexed to Prussia (so-called North German Confederation)
1871	Unification of Germany
1945	The Potsdam conference gives Poland the territories east of the Lusatian Neisse River

Source: J. Szczepankiewicz-Battek (2005, p. 38–57) after: M. Cygański, R. Leszczyński (1995 and 1997).

An example of the latter premise could be a border that is very distinct in the cultural landscape of Upper Lusatia – the one between the Kingdoms of Prussia and Saxony, defined at the Congress of Vienna (1815). Saxony was punished for its earlier support for Napoleon by being deprived of a part of its territory (including all Lower and a large part of Upper Lusatia) for the benefit of Prussia. In Upper Lusatia, the border between these countries was drawn along the river Black Elster (Fig. 2).

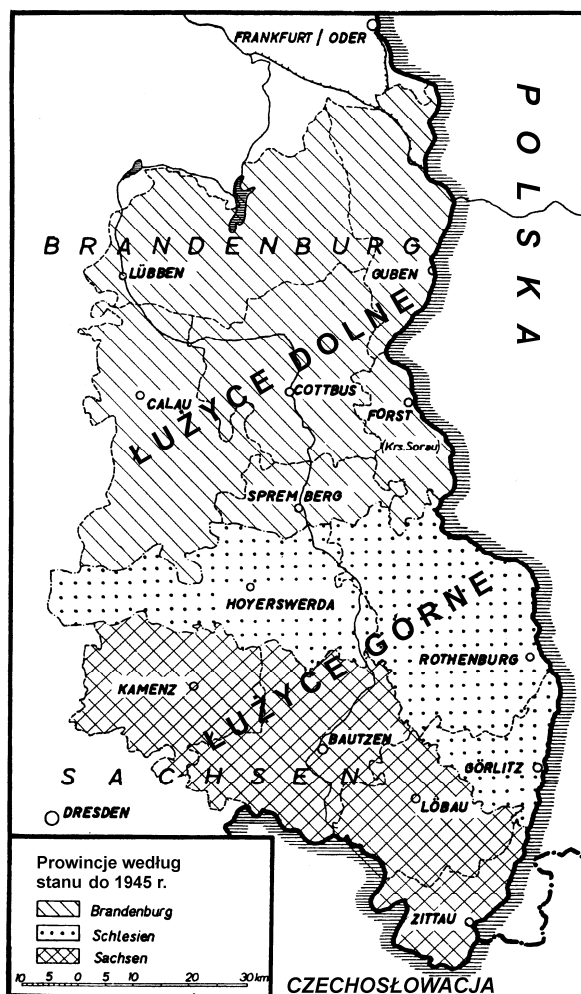


Fig. 2. Administrative division of Silesia in 1815–1945  
Source: after E. Tschernik (1954, p. 21)

Prussia acquired the northern piece of the so-called Catholic Lusatia enclave with a country town of Wittichenau (Lus. Kulow). In the areas incorporated into Prussia, the majority of inhabitants remained Catholic, but the germanization pressure was stronger there than in Saxony. This is why the inscriptions placed on wayside crosses, characteristic for this region, were in German or Latin, while those in the Saxon territory were almost exclusively in the Upper Lusatian language (Fig. 3–4).



Fig. 3. A cross in Chrościcy (Germ. Crostwitz), photo by M. Battek

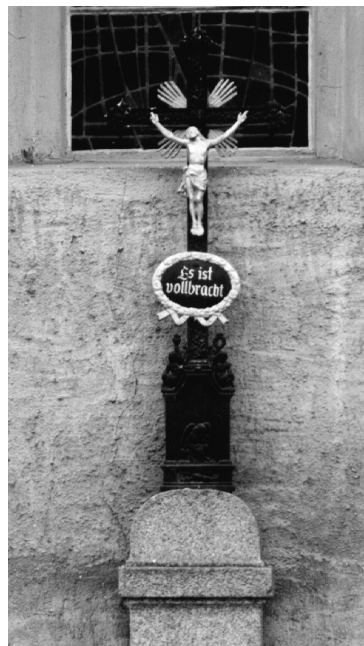


Fig. 4. A cross in Kulow (Germ. Wittichenau), photo by M. Battek

One can envisage the scale of germanization and the territorial range of this process when analysing the names placed on graves or monuments commemorating victims of both world wars in various places. It is clear that germanization processes were more intense in the areas bordering Bohemia and Poland. The reason was that the authorities of Prussia (and then united Germany) tried to create a specific “cordon” around Lusatians, thus hampering contacts of Slavic inhabitants of the region with nations speaking similar languages (Szczepankiewicz-Battek, 2005).

### 3. THE INHABITANTS AND CULTURE OF LUSATIA IN HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY RESEARCH

The Lusatians (Lusatian Sorbs) are the smallest existing nation speaking a Slavonic language. The Upper-Lusatian and Lower-Lusatian languages are counted among Western-Slavonic languages (together with Polish, Czech, Slovak and Kashubian), with Upper-Lusatian clearly resembling Czech and Lower-Lusatian – rather than Polish. Polish Sorabists (including E. Siatkowska and E. Wrocławska), in collaboration with other Slavists, have drafted a linguistic map of Lusatia, which could also be an interesting research material for historical geographers (Fig. 5).

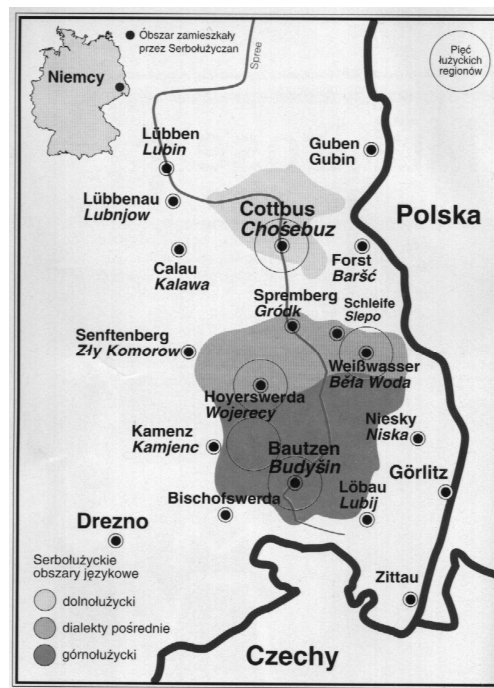


Fig. 5. Contemporary range of Lusatian languages

Source: after *Mały informator o Serbołużyczanach...* (1994, p. 2)

The numerical strength of Lusatians was repeatedly a subject of research in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The studies, conducted predominantly by Lusatian scholars or those from other Slavic countries (including the Pole, Olgierd Nowina) provided an alternative to the official statistical data of the Kingdoms of Prussia and Saxony, and then united Germany, obtained in censuses.

What attracts attention in almost all of those studies, are the substantial discrepancies between the numbers quoted by the authorities and those provided by Lusatians. They are probably mostly the result of different criteria of counting the studied population among Lusatians, adopted by both sides. In compliance with a regulation by the state authorities of Prussia, all the subjects who spoke German fluently were regarded as Germans in censuses, even if they used another language at home on everyday basis (Germ. Muttersprache). This was also the problem, which Polish-speaking Silesians had to contend with. On the other hand, researchers representing Lusatian circles (or other Slavic nationalities) usually regarded everybody that declared Lusatian nationality as a Lusatian Sorb. The most detailed analysis of changes in the number of Lusatians (in 1832–1945) was presented by Arnost Cernik (Germ. Ernst Tschernik) in a publication *Die Entwicklung der Sorbischen Bevölkerung von 1832 bis 1945* (Berlin 1954). The author compiled detailed statistical data gathered by all his predecessors and compared them with official census data (Fig. 6). The results of Cernik's research, which were considered disadvantageous for the official political line of the GDR, were kept secret. They were not revealed to the public until the political transformation of the 1990s. In the recent years, the most acclaimed specialist on historical demography of the Lusatians has been Ludwig Ela (Germ. Ludwig Elle).

An extremely interesting question is that of religious diversity of the Lusatian population and its consequences for the cultural landscape. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, most of the inhabitants of the region, regardless of their nationality, sympathized with Martin Luther's teaching. The only group that did not adopt the new ecclesiastical order were people who lived on church estates (Szczepankiewicz-Battek, 2005). Although Catholics made only a small percentage (c. 10%) of the population of Lusatia, the fact that they lived in compact groups made it easier for them to preserve their own language and culture than for Lutherans, who suffered stronger assimilation pressure. Anyway, the relationships between both denominations in the region were proper – a spectacular proof of that could be the fact that the most important church of Budyšin (Bautzen) – St. Peter (Germ. Peterskirche) has been used jointly by Catholics and Lutherans since 1524; for this reason it is known as a “shared church” (Germ. Simultankirche). The followers of both confessions have always tried to respect each other's views and avoided open confrontation in those matters which could have become an object of disagreement.

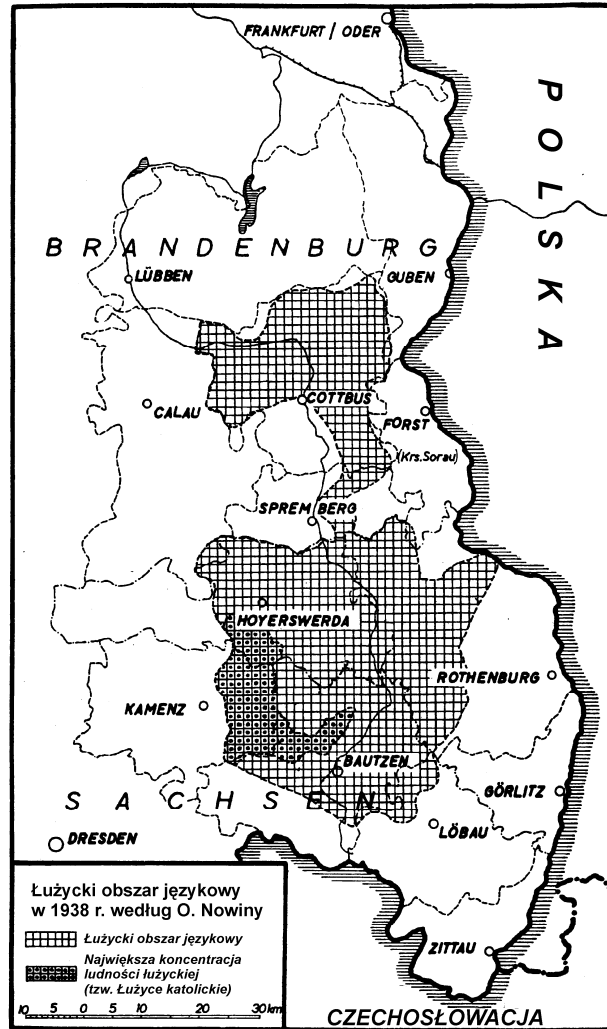


Fig. 6. Shrinking of the geographical range of Lusatian languages in 1872–1938  
 Source: after E. Tschernik (1954, p. 41)

This phenomenon could be illustrated by religious “small architecture” in Upper Lusatia, in the enclave of the so-called Catholic Lusatia. This enclave encompasses about a dozen villages northwest of Budyšin, including two important Catholic centres of worship – Cistercian nuns' Marienstern convent (Lus. Marijna Hwězda) in the village of Panschwitz-Kuckau (Lus. Pančicy-Kukow) and Our Lady of Róžant sanctuary in Rosenthal (Lus. Róžant). The inhabitants of the region still strongly observe old religious traditions, forgotten in many Catholic regions of Europe (e.g. performing pilgrimages in

traditional folk clothing). For many years, the Roman Catholic Church in Lusatia was administratively linked with the Church in Bohemia and Austria, so many of its traditions originate in those regions. However, the close neighbourhood of the Lutheran majority in Lusatia resulted in the fact that Catholics tried not to offend their neighbours' religious sensibilities and they did not display excessively those elements of the Catholic doctrine that were unacceptable to Lutherans. Therefore, in the 'small architecture' at the fringe of the discussed region one could hardly see the images of Our Lady or the saints – although they are plentiful in places located in the centre of the enclave or inside churches. On the other hand, wayside crosses are numerous, usually with quotations from religious songs or texts of short prayers inscribed below. Lutheranism, placing theological emphasis on the Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus, could accept this element without major objections (Fig. 3–4).

Also, the interior design of the majority of Roman-Catholic churches in the region is relatively modest, far from sumptuous Austrian-Czech Baroque. The best example could be the ascetic interior of the sanctuary in Różant. To some extent, this was also due to the fact that most of the people in the region were poor, but churches in many not less poor regions of Catholic Europe have far richer décor.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

The above examples by no means exhaust the potential of Lusatia as space stirring interest among historical geographers. For example, it could be extremely interesting to conduct comprehensive research (using retrospective and retrogressive methods) into the influence of the industrialization of Lusatia and the related elimination of indigenous Lusatian settlements on the national and cultural awareness of the Lusatians (unfortunately, the processes of depriving the indigenous people of their national identity are very distinct, especially in Lower Lusatia). Certainly, when studying time and space in the region, it would be also interesting to employ on a larger scale research methods used by other sub-disciplines of geography (e.g. modern methods of demography and settlement geography, including typically mathematical methods) or ones used in completely different sciences, e.g. economics, social psychology or sociology.



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Section III

**HISTORICAL REGIONS  
IN ALPEN-ADRIA REGION**



## **GEOPOLITICS OR GEOCHESISTICS: HISTORICAL REGIONS IN THE BALKANS BETWEEN SMALL AND BIG PLAYERS. A CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

**Who really created the contemporary borders in the Balkans?** After the change of communist regimes in South-Eastern Europe and the collapse of some nation-states, the Balkan Peninsula fell into a deep crisis. The revival of national ideas began seeking the arguments for territorial reconstruction, following the idea of equitable borders, which should include (more or less) all “our” nationality-members. These tensions were defined by two rather contradictory criteria: criterion of the so-called “natural-rights” and criterion of “right of historical borders”. The first one encompasses the idea of homogeneous collective body of “nation” and – through these ideologies – the nation-state as a territorial-political term. The right should follow people’s national affiliation or similar characteristics (ethnic identity, mother tongue, colloquial language, religious belonging and similar). But the census data was (and still is!) a questionable source in this regard, because it is influenced by many factors, which do not have any common point with real ethnic structure. Or even worse: the censuses were used as instruments of pressure to particular communities. The second criterion is represented by the historical regions. These are border territories with some tradition (as long as possible). But which historical period shall be used for “historical region”? The usability of both mentioned criteria depends not on their exactness, but on the way, somebody (wishes to) understand them. That is the reason for many tricky situations, where territorial disputes came to the scene. Going back to the political history and territorial development of some states in the Balkans, brought a very interesting and general experience: the

national ideas follow the combination of both (as mentioned: contradictory) criteria. The national geopolitics need territory first, and then defines their population ethnically! But, the creation of historical borders in the Balkans have been influenced (or simply created) by other powers.

The last territorial solutions at the example of former Yugoslavia, particularly in Bosnia and Kosovo, represent a very interesting compromise. They both show the complexity of border-making and the dominance of “outer” factors in this issue. In the Bosnian case, the dominant criterion for identifying the state is the “recognized” international border (criterion of historic border!), but the inner borders (entities – very unique idea on the global scale, and the “cantons”) were outlined quite strictly according to the ethnic criteria (and the cease-fire line too!). Kosovo is another and practically different case. After almost three decades of long crisis, an international intervention and an international protectorate, the “outer” powers decided about the independence of Kosovo, (practically) argued by the right to self-declaration of Kosovo Albanians. The territory was chosen by last political unit there, the Autonomous Region of Kosovo, despite the fact that it did not exist at the time of this (international) decision. Disappearing multiethnic composition was not the reason for creating inner (political-administrative) territorial units in order to protect Serbian community (as for example cantons in Bosnia). Both examples (Bosnia and Kosovo) are very complicated and there is not enough room for explaining the whole context in this elaboration. It is just used as an indicative case of process of border-making, related to international crisis solutions.

In the context of historical and contemporary border-making, we may put three basic questions:

- who is (the strongest or most influent) decision maker?
- how important is a particular (defined historically or/and ethnically) territory?
- what influence does this situation have on a larger regional scale?

**The factors, the places, the situations: the play can begin.** This contribution is an attempt at rethinking national territories in the Balkans: their creation, their definition/understanding through time and their contemporary (mis)use. The decision for using the term “geochessistic” instead or simultaneously with “geopolitics” was made, when observing the influence of the aforementioned factors. The author has no ambition to modify the (geopolitical) terminology. It is just an ironic criticism of modern (real) geopolitics, applied here, now and in Europe of tomorrow.

## 2. GEOCHESISTICS: A BORROWED TERM

The factors, the places and the situations are the three important issues, which might be used in the process of border-making. As shown above, these are individual solutions, depending mostly on combination of different factors. Despite existing international law and the main (generally accepted among elites) political principles, the variation of using the same criteria or principles raises some serious questions. Observing just the conflict solutions in different locations of the former Yugoslavia, all of the mentioned criteria have been used equally in order to end the local military conflicts and ethnic cleansings. While the Serbian “krajinas” in Croatia simply witnessed a few military operations in 1995, the Bosnian case shows the strength of military and political pressure of great powers, the case of Kosovo (1999 and 2008) demonstrates the rivalry between the former “West” and “East” (United States and Russia), and the “Ohrid agreement” represents European compromise attempt at geopolitical reality in the southern Balkans. The only clear to-be-followed idea is the (real) geopolitics, where just one thing is important: old political borders must be respected. But also this can be interpreted in various ways.

Nerzuk Ćurak, a Bosnian, defined the Post-Dayton situation in Bosnia very briefly and clearly: geopolitics is some kind of a destiny (Ćurak, 2002, p. 12). This renowned book explains how the international situation influenced great powers in order for the (compromise) peace-agreement to take place. The whole story was, as Ćurak mentioned, a big game. Similarly in some way, a known German journalist Meier accused the great powers and recognized them as important factors for the “death” of the the former multiethnic federations (Pirjevec, p. 15–17). There are some other authors who accused the country (Yugoslavia) and its political elites of the deterioration of the interethnic relations between national groups, which makes the potential for enlarging the already existing (inner) conflict (which actually happened). So, the “destiny” was shaped (again!) by other/strange forces in a frame of a big geopolitical game...

**Now, why geochechistics?** The situation, the players and the fields: three basic elements of a royal game – chess. In comparison with geopolitics, there are some elements in common. This can be used in context of geopolitical thoughts, where the combination of different elements could bring some advantages. On the other hand, we try to answer all three questions.

### 3. CREATION OF “HISTORICAL” AND “NATIONAL” TERRITORIES IN THE BALKANS THROUGHOUT THE MODERN ERA

During the culmination of the medieval period, the Balkan states, like Serbia, Bulgaria, Byzantine Kingdom, Bosnia and Wallachia dominated the scene. This was last time, when the whole Balkan region was ruled by the home-powers. Except some territories under the Venetian rule, the whole peninsula was divided between the mentioned kingdoms. Lack of military power, social rebellions, religious movements and many inner problems made them weak. During the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, large kingdoms fell one after another under the Ottoman rule. The Balkans became ruled by the Turkish state, who demonstrated strong military power and efficient administrative rules. All the contemporary Balkan states became dependent territories: the majority under Turkish and some smaller part under Austrian-Hungarian and some coastland Venetian rule.

Turkish pressure on Central Europe demolished the Hungarian Kingdom through the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Habsburg Empire, which was the next defence wall between Upper Adriatic and Danube Basin, had fewer difficulties for “collecting the borderlands” in the south-eastern direction. In the next two centuries, the effective Austrian anti-Turkish defence paved their strategic way exactly to the Balkan Peninsula. Using numerous rebellions under the Turkish rule from time to time, the “black-yellow monarchy” began arising and making a large space between the Danube Basin and the Istanbul periphery. In the geopolitical sense, the Balkans became a typical “buffer zone”, ruled peripherally with weak economy and poor developmental perspectives. Due to many forced migrations, the ethnic and religious structure changed and became multiethnic. For defence reasons, the so-called *krajina* was created as a frontier belt on the southern part of the Panonian Basin, settled by more than 30 ethnic groups (then, the ethnic affiliation was not the same as today!). Among them, most numerous were the Croats, Serbs, Hungarians and Germans (Banac, 1984, p. 65–73). Under the Turkish occupation, in some areas Turks settled (Macedonia, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Greece), or islamization changed the religious character (particularly among the Slavonic population in Bosnia), “old” Serbia, among Albanians and some Slavs in the Rodopi Mountains (now the Pomaks). These religious conversions followed additional predisposition for multiethnic character, when (later, of course) the national idea came to the scene. This period (in



16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century) is characterized by processes of cultural dispersion in regard of social and peripherization in economic and spatial development.

The next important stage has followed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Regression of Turkish power resulted from stronger pressure from the Habsburg monarchy and from Russia, which became the most significant geopolitical factor in Eastern Europe and Northern Asia. This caused further peripherization of areas under the Turkish rule, where numerous rebels were a significant indicator of weak authorities. But on the other hand, the Turkish authorities were still powerful enough, so that national rebellions had to seek alliances with some powers abroad. Both the great powers, the Habsburg monarchy and Russia, have had many strategic interests to play an important role in the Balkans. Military tutorship was effective, particularly in the 18<sup>th</sup> and furthermore in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. French invasion in central Europe and Upper Adriatic ended the agony of the Venetian Republic; their territories came mostly under Austrian rule. Successful rebel groups of the Montenegrins, Serbs, Bulgarians, Romanians and Greeks followed this new situation – autonomous territories: Montenegro (beside Dubrovnik, the oldest independent territory on the Balkans), Serbia (Pashaluk of Belgrade), Walachia (Romania proper), Bulgaria (the Danubian part) and Greece (Peloponnese and surrounding archipelagos). The Austrian/Russian and further also British then French tutorship was very important. Soon after gaining independency, those countries began calculating for further “liberation of national territories”, defining it by linguistic and/or religious criteria, but objectively by strategic interests, too. This “geopolitics of small nations” was limited by relatively poor military and economic capacities, so they had to respect the great powers – their tutors and protectors.

The fourth stage of territorial development followed in short period between 1878 (The Berlin Congress) and World War I. The autonomous territories became internationally recognized states and were enlarged through different military operations against the Ottoman Empire. Bosnia became an Austrian protectorate and in 1880 was annexed to the double monarchy. Only the territories of contemporary Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo and Sandjak remained under the Turkish authority; Sandjak with Austrian military assistance (and control, no doubt). National ideologies were oriented on the strategic goals: Serbia to Bosnia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Adriatic coast, Bulgaria to Macedonia and northern Aegean coastland, Greece to the entire Aegean maritime basin and Macedonia, Romania to Transylvania. There were simply not enough territories for those ambitions. It was clear, that both main tutors, Habsburg and Russian empires, will be the next

targets, beside Italy, whose “ostpolitik” followed the idea of “Mare Nostrum” (i.e. the whole Adriatic basin). Austrian tension toward South-East was similar as of Germany, whose “Drang nach Osten” has also the south-eastern strategic variant, the “Balkan way”. Germany tried to implement this idea through investments in Bulgaria; so that some of the reporters described the country as “Prussia of the Balkans”. But by contradiction, Germany invested in the Ottoman Empire, too. “High Porta” was at that time recognized as “Sufferer at Bosphorus”, clearly because of chaotic conditions in public administration, army and generally in all governance-spheres. The Balkan-war in 1912 liberated almost the entire area on the peninsula, except Istanbul. A year after (1913), the next war followed. This was a fight between yesterday’s allies – the fight for interpretation of “our” historical and natural rights, the war for defining national borders. Because of strategic calculations, Germany supported the creation of independent Albania (the idea of Albanian national movement is older, but it was too weak to be realized) (Tunjič, 2004, p. 189–193). Otherwise, the territorial-political fragmentation followed the very complicated system of dependent and independent territorial units. This process was recognized already at that time as “balkanization”.

Soon after the Balkan wars, the next conflict followed. It began in Sarajevo, Bosnia, as a result of tensions of some (Serbian) groups against Austrian rule. The confronted European states began the largest war in the history until that time, dividing themselves into two blocks: the so-called “Entente” and “Central Forces”. The Balkan countries were divided, of course because of geopolitical interests, and followed by previous tutorship and alliances. Bulgaria and Turkey together with Central Forces, calculated for gaining the Aegean coast and Macedonia (they treated Macedonians as Bulgarians), Greece hoped for the entire Aegean maritime basin and the belonging coastland, Serbia wished to maintain the central position in the Balkans and hoped for the expansion westwards to Bosnia and Adriatic coast. They all have had their “holy” historical land and locations, related mainly to the “golden medieval period”. But on the other hand, they had to respect the relations between great players, the foreign forces: Russia, France, Italy, Germany, Austro-Hungary and the United Kingdom. Followed by the example of Italian unification, also some outer powers believed in Serbia as a “Piedmont of the Balkans” (Boeckh, 2009, p. 98). Of course, this idea followed the geopolitical interests to block German-Austrian “Südostpolitik”.

After World War I, the political map of the Balkans was changed radi-

cally. Three multiethnic empires (Austro-Hungary, Russia, Ottoman Empire) disappeared. Instead, new states were multinational, particularly SHS-state (later Yugoslavia) and Romania. Their territorial extent was more than doubled and (particularly in Yugoslavia) the titular ethnic group constituted less than 50% of the population (in Romania around 70%). The integration of population to the (common) nation seemed to be the dominant inner-political orientation.

Unsuccessful integration tensions (among others, national groups understood as forced assimilation) followed many confrontations. After an “outer” pressure, when Third Reich, together with some allies (Hungary, Italy, Bulgaria) attacked Yugoslavia and Greece (there were calculations for territorial reconstruction, again), Yugoslavia collapsed and have been divided between the aggressors. But in significant parts of Yugoslavia, the puppet-states were established: Croatia (under the so-called “ustasche” forces) encompassed Bosnia; under the Italian and German influence zone, Serbia proper (under the so-called *chetniks*), under German military control, independent Montenegro (under Italian patronage), as well as expansion of Albania to almost entire Kosovo and western Macedonia (practically, Albania used to be an Italian semi-colony) under Italian patronage. Bulgaria incorporated the lands of contemporary Macedonia and eastern part of Serbia, main part of Vojvodina (Bačka) belonged to Hungary, while Banat (settled by German population, but not only!) became a territory under German military authority (Klemenčič and Žagar, 2004, p. 153–154).

**Balkanization, for the second time.** The next step followed after World War II. There were some territorial changes for Italy (it lost Istria and the Slovene coastland, as well as some islands in Adriatic and Aegean archipelago). Beside this, a majority of Italians emigrated, like Germans from Vojvodina and other places. Regarding contemporary geopolitics, the inner border became more important. There were many significant questions, how to make the borders between Yugoslavian federal republics. The decisions respected different criteria and made several compromises, but this was out of international interests, because those borders were treated as “inner” and “administrative” – until the 1990s, when the former republics became states (or wished to become) and tried to change some borders. The republics were political units, the territories with adequate authorities and ruling structures. Let us see some of the border-making solutions. Croatia kept (in general) the territorial border with Slovenia (there are some small changes); in Istria, the contemporary border line followed after 1954. On the

east, Baranja belonged to Croatia, while Srem (until 1918 it was within Croatia's borders) belonged then to Vojvodina and some parts to Serbia proper. Bosnia lost the coastal part in Hercegnovi (Bosnian until 1918), which belonged to Montenegro. This (the smallest Yugoslavian republic) revived the former independent state of Montenegro (which was united with Serbia by force in 1918), but without Metohia, which was together with Kosovo established as autonomous region of Kosovo and Metohia, named at that time Kosmet, in frame of the (Socialist) Republic of Serbia. The same status was achieved by Vojvodina. There were serious negotiations, whether to make a third autonomous region in the Serbian republic, namely, the so-called Sandjak. But it was decided for the division of Sandjak between Montenegro and Serbia. There was also a debate about the status of areas, settled by Serbs in Croatia, namely Krajina. Similarly to the case of Sandjak, the decision avoided the creation of other autonomous territories in frame of Yugoslavia (there were tensions for similar solution for the "Croatian" western Herzegovina). These decisions depended on "inner" i.e. Yugoslavian political authorities (Pleterski, 1984, p. 369, p. 391–397). Further policy of Tito's Yugoslavia for the defence from tensions of socialist tutor(s), Soviet Union and their allies (the so-called Soviet Bloc) followed a very interesting position of "someone between". Yugoslavia was a socialist country with better relations towards the West than towards the "friendly" East. The model of people's federation, underlining the successful „ethnic" solution, was recognized and respected in the world. Some of the authorities in the field of national questions (e.g. Seton-Watson and (limitedly!) also Hobsbawm) accepted the model of ethnic convergence-divergence as a perspective on world's scale. Unfortunately, the development in 1990s revealed the false ideas, covered by socialist doctrine of "brotherhood", when nationalist movements saw their time and chance, as well as threats of the Yugoslavian unification (= Serbization). Moreover, during the Cold War period the Balkans maintained some tendencies to go separate ways. However, the international circumstances were far from the option of dissolution.

The last (contemporary) episode of territorial development of the Balkan countries followed in 1990s, after the great geopolitical changes in Europe and in the World: collapse of socialist regimes (symbolically: the Berlin Wall), European integration and the globalization process. All three processes came at the same time, even though they were not connected directly. Dissolution of multiethnic states (federations) like Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia announced the new era and opposed the

general tensions in Europe (integration). The territorial split and creation of new territorial-political units came to the scene (again).

**Balkanization, for the third time!** Yugoslavian republics declared (Slovenia was the first and the most successful) independency. The European and American diplomacy was surprised and could not propose practically any real alternatives, even though there were several strategic calculations, on how to put the peaceful solutions into practice. There were still contradictions in different stances of international powers to the so-called “Yugoslavian” question. Some of them defended the idea of “union”, a democratically common state (federation), the other – a division (as happened, suddenly). The Yugoslavian conflict was based on ethnic issues. The nationalisms demonstrated their power and revealed the weakness of international community. All the so-called “historical” regions and borders became “interesting” and because of that, they also became an object of conflicts. The territorial reconstruction was a (military and aggressive) expression of national ideals and values. The solutions, as mentioned in the introduction chapter, were different, probably not only (if at all?) because of lack of diplomatic experience, but because of different “geopolitics” towards the Balkans. Maybe Viktor Meier was right, about “a big game”, but the bill had to be paid by the “Balkaninas”. The peace-solutions were individualized, different in each case and far from the unique principles! The dominance of (only one) great player is clear: “Americanization on European playground” is an ironic, but probably the most exact statement (see Ćurak, 2002, 48). According to Ćurak, the Bosnian case “must be done” (the Dayton Agreement, 1995), in order to legitimize western ruling principles in the world and the political existence of NATO (Ćurak, 2002, p. 160–163).

#### **4. GEOCHESSISTICS OR STORY ABOUT GEOPOLITICS OF WEAK COUNTRIES**

In order to answer the three questions, mentioned in the introduction, the regression analysis of territorial-political development can help a great lot, but is not enough. We ought to judge the last geopolitical changes through the influence of three sides: players (outer sources), importance of places and importance of situation on larger (particularly on European but even on the global) level.

Each of the mentioned ethnic communities developed their own geo-

politics; the idea how to manage different factors in order to achieve common goal: a nation-state. As shown, those ideas/ideologies were defeated, but not in the same way and to the same extent. There are significant differences, which raises serious questions. The end of war in Croatia was achieved by the “permission” of allied forces for Croatia to solve “the problem” with military means. By defeating the Serbs in Knin, the Croatian forces put “checkmate” to the “chessboard” (in the Croatian national flag, the coat of arms has a red-white “chessboard”!). In the context of achieving the official, internationally recognized borders this was a right thing to do, but certainly not in terms of minority protection. As a consequence, the majority of Serbs from Krajina lost their homes and emigrated. Their return was slow and inefficient. Through the military operation, former “Krajina” emptied.

This story must be observed from another perspective: Bosnia. After three years of Serbian ignorance of international authorities and many diplomatic attempts to finish the bloodsheds in this “all against all” war, it was necessary to put serious pressure to the Serbian side in Bosnia. The international forces needed the Serbian side (in Croatia) to be defeated (Pirjevec, 2003, p. 447). In light of geochessistics, the situation predominated! By this event, the Serbian side became weaker and more inclined to political discussions. On the other side, international community, and particularly the United States, needed a success story in Bosnia. They have been prepared for military intervention (Pirjevec, 2003, p. 240). Third point in this context is the weakness of Russia, the Serbian “protector”, because of their troubles in Chechnya (Pirjevec, 2003, p. 444). However, the players (allied forces, NATO) were too weak in comparison to other side (Russia) and the figures (Serbs, Croato-Muslim «Bosnian» alliance) were too equal. The result of this “game” is the Dayton agreement, which brought the end of war, but established an invalid state. In chess it is called stale-mate!

Kosovo was, similarly to Chechnya in Russia, treated as an “inner” problem. The international audience waited until the final solutions on the “western” side of the former Yugoslavia. Pirjevec, Slovene historian and author of renowned book “Yugoslavian wars” is sure, that this situation resisted as such because of Russian assistance, namely the situation and influence of one of the players! Furthermore, Pirjevec argued, that after a certain time (years) NATO needed to demonstrate the necessity of its existence. On the other hand, the western part of former federation was “under control”, so that next operation was easily possible. Here is another situation – the military intervention of NATO alliance in 1999 was certainly a new situation on the global scale. This was the first serious military

operation of NATO and performed against the consensus of the UN Security Council (Pirjevec, 2003, p. 245–246). Even though very poor in terms of military achievement, the consequences for Serbia were crushing: the “holy place” – Kosovo (a birthplace of the medieval Serbian state) was taken under international control and has been practically excluded from Serbia. Kosovo became a protectorate, divided into four operational zones (Hofbauer, 2009). Furthermore, the same happened to Montenegro, a part of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which was excluded in terms of monetary system: it was allowed to use EURO as (national) currency. This prepared further steps to referendum and independency declaration in 2006!

But the final solution for Kosovo came in 2008. Under American influence and with assistance of some European countries (not all of EU members!), Kosovars (Kosovo’s Albanians) declared independency in February 2008. This youngest European state still has much trouble in efficient governance, so that the international mission remains there (now: EULEX). In this context, the players have a dominant role and simply defeated the other side (Russian) as well as the dominant domestic “figure” (Serbia).

But again: the peace-solutions in Moldova were purely under Russian dominance: Transdnistria recognized as an independent state (Russia, Ukraina), while the Gagauz enclave remains within Moldovan borders, but with a high level of territorial autonomy.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The weak countries are mainly not (or very limited) the rulers of their own destiny. Maybe this finding puts us to some kind of “neo-realpolitik”. Geochessistics can be understood as an experience in geopolitics of weak territories. The case of national-historical territories in the Balkans proves this point. It is not something to be wished as a general principle, but has happened many times.

On the other hand, this experience can be usable in managing other conflicts around the world. To know the power and knowledge of the players, to use proper situation (strategic “timing”) and use the proper (not necessary the strongest) figures can be the right way.

The Balkans is governed from the outside, particularly by the United States. Regarding the European geopolitics in the Balkans, we may find that EU is not a strong player. Does the European geopolitics exist at all? It seems not.

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**REGION**  
*and*  
**REGIONALISM**  
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## **PERAST, HISTORICAL BORDER TOWN BETWEEN VENICE AND THE SLAVIC WORLD**

The city of Perast is situated between the bays of Risan and Kotor, right in front of the Strait of Verige, and faces both of its shores. There are no more than 400 inhabitants despite the fact that it still looks like a small urban centre as it had once been in the past. In fact, there are houses, palaces, churches built in the Venetian architectonic and artistic style; even today it looks as if it was a Venetian suburb, and does not seem to have lost its past glory as an important centre in the Bay, of great strategic value. In other words, despite the small number of inhabitants it still gives an urban image, resembling a big open-air museum, given the lack of elements that are not a part of its traditional structure. Therefore, it seems that time has stopped there: such impression is reinforced by the fact that even though in high season its beaches are full of tourists, there is not much tourist infrastructure and the existing one is so immersed in the city's urban landscape that it cannot be spotted easily.

Despite the fact that Perast could be older than some archaeological exhibits may show, it was first mentioned in historical records in Early Medieval times, when the city depended on the Benedictine Abbey situated on the S. George's Island, and there was a shipyard rivalling the one existent in Kotor. Perast gained more importance only after 1482, after the Bay (from Herceg Novi to Risan) fell under the Ottomans' rule, and it became a border city next to the border between the Ottoman and the remaining Christian territory. From that moment on, Venice encouraged its development as a true bastion against the Ottomans and the Muslim piracy, and in 1539 even decided to give to 12 local noble families the privilege of guarding the S. Marc's gonfalon during the war, which went on until the fall of the Republic in 1797. The 16<sup>th</sup> century has been a great instability for the Bay of

Kotor, because there was not only a political power border, but it was also a place where the Muslim and the Christian worlds met, and even more, where the Catholicism and the Orthodoxy clashed. In fact, in 1568 eleven Barbary corsairs entered the Bay and sacked Perast (Sbutega, 2006, p. 111) that had no walls at the time. Furthermore, in 1571 at Lepanto, seven of Perast's gonfalon holders lost their lives while trying to protect the gonfalon on the flagship, whose captain was Giovanni of Austria, also from Perast (Sbutega, 2006, p. 112). Being already traditionally the city of shipyards and having also a medium-small naval fleet, after these events, Perast managed to have a bigger canal too, that could host heavier ships, and among these there were some of the biggest galleons of the time. There was also an "upgrade" from a political and administrative point of view, when Perast got free from Kotor's aristocracy, and became a free city, ally of Venice, with its aristocracy, institutions and its own associations, not so different from other Dalmatian cities.

Considering that Perast was surrounded by Ottoman territories, the lack of walls has represented a serious problem for its habitants; in 1624 Barbary pirates took advantage of the absence of men, and sacked the city, kidnapped women, old people and children in order to get ransom. To prevent such events, in 1628 the city decided to build a fortress just behind the urban territory, and to name it Holy Cross (Sveti Križ), a homage to the patronage that the Holly Cross provided to the old Perast families. But the city's archive documents also reveal that already in 1570 a fortress stood just above the city; therefore, it is possible that the Holly Cross was just an enlargement and a reinforcement measure of that fortress (Radulović, Brainović, 2006, p. 47). The fortress kept a small Venetian garrison, whose commander, despite being paid by Venice, was chosen inside Perast. This construction had a very important role in 1654 during an Ottoman attack, started by an army of 5.000 men aboard of eight ships coming from Herceg Novi, as a revenge for Venice's temporary conquest of Risan. Despite the modest numbers of the defending army, the fortress managed to resist, the enemy commander was killed, and the aggressors were forced to retreat. The moral importance of such success was so significant that the victory day was dedicated to the Lady of the Rocks as a token of thanks, and it is still celebrated today.

Differently from the nearby Kotor, whose habitants descended from the Romans or the Latin Slavs, the city of Perast was Catholic but remained Slavic, as we can see from the historical onomatology; on the other hand, the other urban centres of the Bay, which were controlled by Venice since 1687,

after the Muslims were gone, became very soon populated by the Orthodox inhabitants (Sbutega, 2006, p. 221). The inhabitants of Perast were known as excellent sailors, so much that at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when Peter the Great sent a group of young people to Venice, who were to master the nautical arts, he entrusted their schooling to the captain Marko Martinović from Perast. He let them stay at his own home and let them use his own ship. When the Tsar sent Count Tolstoy to verify their advancement, he wrote that Perast was inhabited by Croats (which really meant Catholics, *author's remark*), "sea captains, astronomers and sailors", while in the nearby villages there were Orthodox Serbs, which were hard to distinguish from Croat peasants (Sbutega, 2006, p. 164).

The beauty of Perast, and perhaps, its contradiction too, is the fact that the city today is almost the same as when it was a free municipality under Venice's patronage, except for the presence of motor vehicles and a small tourist port, while in the past there were significantly bigger ships. The monuments and the inhabited parts are almost the same both on the land and on the two islands in front of the shore. Therefore, the urbanistic plan is almost identical, but while the past is grandiosely prestigious, today's city is reduced to a mere tourist passing-by place.

Perast's glorious past can be seen not only when reading its history, but also if we consider the number of erected churches and palaces that still exist there. Today's main road is behind the town, and is a part of the coastal road that circles the entire Bay, but it has nothing to do with the town itself. On the other hand, the only internal street that allows circulation inside the town is next to the sea, with the palaces on the other side. The most Western-style among these is the Bujović Palace; according to tradition (Radulović, Brainović, 2006, p. 35) it was built using the stones which were originally part of Herceg Novi's walls, destroyed after the city was freed from the Ottoman domination in 1687. Some of the epigraphs on the façade, indicating 1694 as the year the construction begun, also commemorate the heroism of Vicko Bujović; the palace has been built and paid for by Venice, as a token of its gratitude. Vicko and his brother Ivan were members of the Stojišić "casada", one of the 12 aristocratic families of Perast, whose heraldic coat of arms is represented on the façade. It is one of the best architectural works on the Adriatic coast, designed by the Venetian architect Gianni Battista Fontana. The style was still inspired by Renaissance: the proof is the string of arcs, interrupted by columns on the low ground, made of stone using the rustication technique. There is also some Baroque influence, in the rich ornaments and parapets on each floor on three sides of the palace; the

longest of these runs along the entire façade on the first floor, and is decorated on the angles with two stone lions holding the family's coat of arms. The narrow coastal road in front of the palace, built in 1912, gives the impression that the palace floats on water, similar to the effect that the observers get in Venice above its canals. Ever since 1957, the Bujović palace has accommodated the Civic Museum, containing documents and relics telling the town's story. Today there are 19 palaces in Perast, all bearing the coats of arms of their owner's families, and almost all of them were built in baroque style during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the town's "golden age". Together with numerous churches which can be seen in every corner of the urban space, the palaces do not make the town similar to an open-air museum, where the articles in exposition seem to be behind a virtual glass; instead, they give the impression of being inside a town that is still very much alive, even if it is lost in time, and still without – at least until the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century – the tourist masses that crowd the streets of Venice and the nearby Kotor.

In the central square, there is the church of Saint Nicholas, built in 1616; the Renaissance-style bell tower has been added in 1691, designed by the Venetian architect Giuseppe Beati: it is 55 meters high, making it the tallest one in the Bay, that really towers over other buildings in the entire town, and it becomes the dominant in the visual when observed from afar, especially from the sea. This construction should have been made for a much bigger church than the San Nicholas; however, that project was abandoned around 1800 because of the lack of funds, during the Napoleonic wars. Only the apse and the nave have been completed, and today they are incorporated into the same architectonic unit with the previous church; even its external walls remind of the urban history, bearing some inscriptions, such as one in the local dialect, celebrating the victory over the Ottomans in 1654.

The particularity of Perast is accentuated by the two islands, situated about a hundred meters from both shores. On the left of the coast, there is the Island of Saint George (*Sveti Djordje*), containing the homonymous Benedictine abbey, and also, immersed in cypresses, the town's cemetery. Its origin is very old and dates, perhaps, to the 9<sup>th</sup> century (Radulović and Brainović, 2006, p. 21), even if it is mentioned for the first time in certain Kotor documents in 1166, as a project built to ensure the passage through the Verige Strait. Since then it has been rebuilt fairly often, up to the moment it was completely destroyed by an earthquake in 1669. After this event, the church that exists today was built, very simple and built using some elements from the previous building. The old cemetery – used until 1866 when another

was built north of the town – still contains the tombstones with coats of arms of the illustrious Perast families, while the whole insular perimeter is surrounded by fortified walls that even include embrasures. In fact, the abbey was the scenery of various war episodes, because of its exposure to the pirates' attacks. One more time in 1812, it has been occupied by the Napoleon's French troops that occupied also the Holly Cross fortress; at last, in 1814 Saint Georges has fallen under the Austrian occupation, because of its strategic position that allowed the control of the Bay.

The other little island of the Lady of the Rocks (*Gospa od Škrpiela*), unique in its genre, is not a natural island, but is man-made, and accommodates the most important sanctuary dedicated to the Virgin in the Bay. Until the 15<sup>th</sup> century there was only a rock, but since then the inhabitants of Perast have been throwing blocks of stones into the sea, in order to create a solid ground and to build then a chapel dedicated to the Virgin. This construction was supposed not only to ensure the Virgin's protection to the sailors, but also to give the town jurisdiction over the new island, and counter-balance Kotor's jurisdiction over Saint George; in fact, the abbey was controlled by the latter until 1634, when it went under Venice's direct control. The island's surface got larger with time, due also to everything that got thrown into the sea and the enemy ships' relics that were drowned there, and today it is about 3.000 m<sup>2</sup> large. Various sacral buildings were built, but were eventually destroyed during various wars. Today's church is a Baroque building dated 1630 with an octagonal dome, while the bell tower was built in 1722. The building's interior is particularly solemn, decorated with over 60 oil paintings with sacral themes, painted by Tripo Kokolja (1661–1713) from Perast, considered the best Baroque artist of the Adriatic. Also, there are many other works of local and foreign artists, that go from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century; among these, an icon of Saint Rocco, thought to be the work of Tiepolo. The island is a very important, identity-bound place for the town's inhabitants and can be considered both in past and present, as its very "soul": in fact, the church guards over 2.500 *ex voto* silver plates which were donated to the Virgin by sailors and fishermen who have escaped the perils of the sea. Furthermore, every 22<sup>nd</sup> July, the day of the Virgin, trying to commemorate Perast's glorious past, there is a procession of boats that reaches the island accompanied by traditional songs and the sound of the boats' sirens; once they arrive, everyone throws a stone into the water, and therefore contributes to an ulterior enlargement of the island, even if it is a traditional target for tourists and visitors during almost whole year.

There is a strong Venetian influence to Perast that continues even today, and is easily explained by the fact that the real golden age of the town coincided with the centuries during which it was under the patronage of the Venetian Republic, especially when – until 1687 – its purpose was to resist as the last Venetian outpost on the border with the Ottoman dominions. This long period ended abruptly in 1797 with the cession of the Saint Marc's Republic and its territories to the Habsburg family, following Napoleon's orders. The Venetian flag in the Bay was furled in fact in Perast with a solemn ceremony on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, after the peace preliminaries between France and Austria in Louben, before the ratifying in Campoformio. The flag has been given a 21-gun salute, deposited in a silver urn and hidden in a secret place, before the Austrians arrived (Sbutega, 2006, p. 229). There is some historical irony in the fact that the last seven-tailed Saint Marc's flag has been waved for the last time on the extreme periphery of the Venetian territories, and has been defended until the end by subjects which were not originally from Venice, but "slaves" – meaning Slavs that embraced (even if only as subordinates) the Venetian cause. Ippolito Nievo remembers this in *Confessioni di un italiano* (in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter), but instead of being hidden, the flag is being burned – to highlight the dramatic pathos: "...the proud Perast habitants burned the last Saint Marc's flag crying. The Venetian Republic was dead, and its spirit wandered still in the far horizon of life over the Eastern sea".

Such loyalty to Venice was particularly strong among the inhabitants of Perast and of the Bay of Kotor generally, considering that the alliance with the Republic was not a submission act, but a free choice of the population; furthermore, the Republic favoured economic development, by providing cultural ties with the Christian part of Europe (Sbutega, 2006, p. 230) and by guarding the internal part of the Bay from the Ottoman occupation. Since then, in all the changes in the sovereign ranks of the city, that followed closely the destiny of the entire Bay, Perast never recuperated fully and has become the shadow of its former self, all the way until today's "soft musemification"; since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century many of its buildings were restored and brought to life as holiday homes.

When considering the flag episode mentioned before, we need to precise that it is preserved not only in the Italian historical memories, but has also become a myth, a manifestation of eternal loyalty of the Dalmatian people to Saint Marc's Republic. A fundamental factor contributing to such result was a speech, which according to the Monsigneur Vincenzo Ballovich, a provost from Kotor, has been given on that August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1797 by the Perast captain

Giuseppe Viscovich. The speech that follows, in literary Italian, corresponds to the text Ballovich described. Later on, in the *Storia documentata di Venezia* written by Samuele Romanin and printed between 1853 and 1861, it is said that Giuseppe Viscovich's speech was given in Venetian dialect; in it, the Italian phrase *tu fosti con noi, e noi con te* (you were with us, and we were with you) is replaced by a much stronger *ti con nu, nu con ti* (same meaning, in Venetian dialect), a clear and straightforward structure similar to a math formula, which gained much popularity in the following two centuries. Furthermore, in 1898 the Count Francesco Viscovich, a descendent of the captain Viscovich from Perast, claimed that his ancestor could only have spoken in Slavic language (which means today's Serbian or Croatian) because he and those who listened to him – all Slavs – would have never reneged on their own nationality and neither would have they “denatured” themselves using a different language instead of their native one. Therefore, there were many discussions on the language used by Viscovich which have continued until recently. But now let us read the most important part of Viscovich's speech according to Ballovich:

Our children will learn from us, and History will let entire Europe know, that Perast has maintained the glory of the Venetian flag until its last breath, and has honoured it with this solemn ritual, and will put it away washed in universal and bitter tears. We are allowed to let it out, my fellow citizens, let out our pain with our tears; but among these solemn men we shall bring to an end the glorious career spent under the Venetian government, let us all face this beloved flag, and let us express our pain like this: Oh beloved flag! For 377 years, our essence, our blood, our lives were consecrated to you, and ever since you were with us, and we were with you, we were always happy beyond measure, we were famous and always victorious at sea. [...] If only the present, so sad because of bad judgment, its liberal habits, its disagreements, its illegal actions that offended nature and people's laws, did not condemn you in Italy, you would have been forever our very essence, our blood and our lives, and before allowing you to be defeated and dishonoured by any of us, our value, our loyalty would have preferred to remain buried with you.

This episode from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it was still a direct and reliable memory, all the way until the 21<sup>st</sup> century even in its “frozen” state, as it usually occurs with myths, has been used in order to suit the present needs. It is not possible to track here all of its history; such a diachronic reconstruction of events has been done by Massimo Tomasutti in an excellent essay published in 2007. Its conclusion, it states that this

homage paid by Perast's people to the Venetian Republic has been interpreted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century through a romantic vision full of nostalgia towards a hypothetical Venetian good government in its Dalmatian territories: in this version, it is stressed out how the loyalty towards the Republic from its Slavic subjects was even superior to the one manifested by the very Venetians, who actually accepted its political suicide, whose incapable governing class legitimized the transfer of the sovereignty over Venice and its Adriatic territories to Austria with the Campoformio Treaty. In the century following the episode of the deposition of the Venetian flag, the episode itself has been reinterpreted in a nationalistic key, mainly through D'Annunzio: the "bard" wanted to use it in order to express the will for an Italian territorial expansion in the Adriatic, by recalling Venice's "imperial" past. It is important to mention here Tomasutti's words on Perast's destiny envisioned by D'Annunzio, that – through the speech culminating in *ti con nu, nu con ti* given by the Dalmatian captain Viscovich.

It becomes, therefore, a geographical and mental site of a heroic dream; a part of a national *nòstos* which could evolve exclusively into a territorial reintegration of Istria and Dalmatia; "eternal rebellious" lands that once belonged to the antique Dominant. [...] According to D'Annunzio too, Perast is a stabile and immutable "place". There can be no doubt then if we consider him a historical "source" in matters of Italian nation's territorial rights. No dialectic over its historical importance is therefore allowed. There was a State (Venice) and overseas territories that belonged to it (Istria and Dalmatia). The relations between one and the other were purely of dominance, and we need to extract the destined "continuity" from this, and the "destiny" of Italy (p. 65–66).

Other than this, D'Annunzio-phase in the interpretation of the Perast episode, functional to a legitimization of an Italian empire over the Adriatic, there is another one that can be found in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and according to Tomasutti's analysis (2007, p. 108) it too was oriented towards legitimizing a mythical image "of a Venetian government, in all of its historical territories, fascinating and virtuous, wise, just and thoroughly missed as a true lost motherland by its ex-subjects from the Overseas". This is a very idyllic image, based on the fraternity between the Dalmatians and the Venetians, that various historians adopted (cfr. Tomasutti, 2007, p. 108–112) but that clashes with the image provided by another historiography (especially in Paladini, 2002, *passim*) according to which in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Dalmatia was a poor, neglected region, afflicted by a poor Venetian government. But if that was the real social and political situation



before the flag's deposition on the fatidic August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1797, why did the local nobles stage such a heart-breaking ceremony, professing loyalty to the dying Venetian regime, erecting that memory to myth in the ages to come? Tomasutti's interpretation is particularly significant; according to it, Perast's governing class wanted to maintain its own legitimacy in front of the inhabitants, despite the institutional change, in such a delicate moment of instability in political sovereignty. Therefore, the public flag deposition can be interpreted as a true passage rite very much connected to the power succession (Tomasutti, 2007, p. 126).

Another important fact for our study of the Perast ceremony from over 200 years ago, is that it never lost its symbolic value, not even during the 21<sup>st</sup> century, because it gained new interpretations that corresponded to contemporary needs, both on the Italian and Montenegrin part. The August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1797 ceremony, with its pathos, is differently interpreted by political and cultural movements of different origins and intentions.

The Italian band "The Fellowship of the Ring", whose name is inspired by Tolkien's book *The Lord of the Rings* is politically oriented to the right, and has produced a song "Goodbye to Perast", singing about the 1797 event. It is presented on the website [www.venetinelmondo-onlus.org](http://www.venetinelmondo-onlus.org) courtesy of the association 'Venetians in the World', and has become its anthem. The song – musically very much inspired by the Genoese singer and author Fabrizio De Andrè's ballads – celebrates the mournful event of the sale – perpetuated by the "Corsican or French" (Napoleon) – of Dalmatia to Austria, damaging those who remained loyal to Venice, while there "the Jacobin drunken lowlifes go crazy and become assassins"; it is obviously a reactionary interpretation of the French revolution and of its consequences. Furthermore, according to the comment to the article "The comeback of the Fellowship of the Rings" written by Annalisa Terranova and published by the right-wing journal "Il Secolo d'Italia" on November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2002, the people of Perast, guided by Giuseppe Viscovich, instead of being considered local Slavs loyal to the Venetian Republic, are assimilated to "Dalmatian Italians": in this case, there is an obvious intention to connect the matter of Venice's Slavic subjects' loyalty to the antirevolutionary polemics, to the irredentism and the Italian nationalism of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and even to the revanchist one following the de-Italianisation of Dalmatia after the World War II. All of the above happened, through the Dalmatian culture that "becomes" Italian through Venice's mediation.

Perast, famous for expressing local identity in 1797, has been redisco-

vered in the forum of the Young Padans Movement<sup>1</sup>, a local organization in the political area belonging to the Lega Nord (the Nord League), with “A trip to Montenegro, with a stop in the Bay of Kotor, Perast, Venice’s «Most loyal Flag-bearer of all»”, published on September 12<sup>th</sup> 2009; the area has been described like an antique and aristocratic decayed town, overtaken by its decline with broken roofs and mullions resembling dark circles under a person’s eyes, with nothing but collapsed walls behind. The interest shown by the North League for this small Bay centre does not surprise, because the League has appreciated the town’s display of political loyalty towards a regional state instead towards a national one, following principles which were interpreted as coherent to those belonging to the before mentioned contemporary separatist movement.

However, the largest appreciation of Perast and especially of what happened there on August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1797 comes from the Venetian nationalists. On August 28<sup>th</sup> 2007, much emphasis was given to the deposition of the Venetian flag in Perast which occurred 210 years before, by performing a ceremony of its restoration to the local church. Members of the cultural association “Veneto nostro”, the Community of Montenegrin Italians and Friends of Perast, Italian Dalmatians in the World and the Veneto-Real regiment also took part. The latter is a group of about twenty members founded in year 2000, derived from the Venetian national movement “Milizia Veneta”, which became fully operative two years after the foundation, and has recreated the arms and uniforms of the “I Infantry Regiment Veneto Real”, which existed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the Republic of Venice was independent. Today they take part in historical commemorations, wearing realistic uniforms, and together with other historic groups they recreate situations and environments. Their website<sup>2</sup> exhorts the creation of an identity spirit, wishing for a better future for the Venetian homeland; its “localist” characteristics opposing an “Italian” identity can be easily seen when there is mention of the 1866 *Austro-Venetian* military victories over the Italian forces.

When it comes to the 2007 celebrations, it is important to mention the presence of the Italian diplomatic authorities present in Montenegro and in Dubrovnik, local Kotor authorities and the Lega Nord regional councillor Umberto Ciambetti; the latter has auspicated a quick admission of Montenegro into the EU, as a formal recognition of common roots that in

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<sup>1</sup> [www.giovanipadani.forumfree.it](http://www.giovanipadani.forumfree.it)

<sup>2</sup> [www.miliziaveneta.com](http://www.miliziaveneta.com)

1797 induced the Perast people to salute one last time the Saint Marc's flag. Such a disclosure of the Lega Nord towards a non-EU country is an apparent contradiction if compared to their traditional hostility towards anything that does not come from North Italy and especially anything coming from outside EU; in fact, the Lega Nord appreciated Montenegro's independent spirit that led to its scission from Serbia in 2006, which is something that the Venetian nationalists, hostile to the Italian state, can relate to.

Therefore, the Italian part – and we shall see, the Montenegrin part too – wants to reconnect the past values to those existing today, in order to legitimize different political goals. Not even the language component was kept outside this “operation”. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the majority of the inhabitants of the Kotor Bay spoke a Slavic language, despite the fact that the Venetian variant of the Italian was the language universally used in the Adriatic, especially for commercial reasons. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century on, this was another reason to engage in a discussion over the language used in the famous August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1797 speech. In regard to this, we must mention the estimate number of today's Italian-speaking people living in the Bay, and in Perast particularly. During the 2003 census in Perast, there were 349 inhabitants, and 149 of those declared themselves as Montenegrins, 101 were Serbs, 29 Croats, 10 Yugoslavs, 3 Bosnians, 1 Macedonian and 59 “other nationalities”. Considering this data, the Montenegro's Italian National Community, that in 2004 founded the Kotor's Committee of the Dante Alighieri Society, gave an estimate of the total number of Italian-speaking people in Montenegro who lived in the Bay territory. Among 500 of these, there are supposedly 140 Italian-speaking people in Perast which however identified themselves as Montenegrins; that would correspond to the 40% of the population, where the traditional “veneto da mar” (Sea-Venetian) used in Dalmatia and especially in the Bay, was disappearing in favour of the standard Italian. This data is directly opposed to Enzo Barnabà's testimony: this former cultural attaché at the Bar Italian Consulate claimed around year 2000 nobody in Perast spoke Italian<sup>3</sup>. This is an opinion that the author shares too, because of personal experience, not only because of failing to find Perast Italian mother-tongue residents, but also because of the total absence of people able to speak Italian fluently.

The attempt of restoring the “Italianness” of the Bay done by the Montenegrin part is opposed to the complete indifference of the Italian state to the whole matter, which is clearly visible in the absence of any financial

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<sup>3</sup> cfr. [www.wikipedia.sapere.virgilio.it/wikipedia/wiki/Discussione:Perasto](http://www.wikipedia.sapere.virgilio.it/wikipedia/wiki/Discussione:Perasto)

support to the Montenegrin Italian Community and to the Kotor Committee of the Dante Alighieri Society. This Italian cultural ancestry, shown through a rediscovery of a common Venetian-influenced culture, could be useful to Montenegro when it comes to the matter of its admission into the EU: the more these two states get closely associated, considering the possibility of an admission, the more value this common culture gains. The fact that the latter survived until the 21<sup>st</sup> century can be explained as a heritage of the same political loyalty that existed in the Bay until 1797; once that was gone, in the post-2006 independent Montenegro, the cultural, material and immaterial affinities, which were the result of a very long Venetian dominance over the Dalmatian coast, became the unifying factor between the Adriatic state and – no more Venetia, of course – Italy.

This result was possible inside the Bay territory also because of the absence of any residual controversy, such as those regarding territorial disputes that appeared in Venezia Giulia, Istria and Rijeka. These regions were given entirely to Yugoslavia – but today are Slovenian and Croatian – after the peace treaty following World War II, and this has also implied the expulsion of the Italian-speaking population that opted for Italian nationality between 1947 and 1954. This inhabitants' exodus produced hate and frustration which even today is all but gone among those who opted for the Italian citizenship, and because of their choice had to abandon the territories that were to be Yugoslavian, and therefore their homes (other than personal memories of a life spent there). On the other hand, in case of the Kotor Bay, the post-war transfer of sovereignty in favor of Yugoslavia did not cause mass migrations towards Italy with all the controversy that came with it, but just a general Slavic resentment against the brutal Italian occupation in the past. Consequently, even in today's post-Yugoslavian reality, much differently from Slovenia and Croatia where any Italian residues are not being valued by the national authorities, in the Montenegrin Bay, all that remains from the Italian culture is something to protect mainly for two reasons: tourist promotion, that favours the arrival of Italian visitors, and the establishment of a cultural bond, based on the renewed friendship between the two nations, which can facilitate Montenegro's admission to the EU, and that in the past was represented by the Montenegrin princess Elena that became queen of Italy, and today by hundreds of Italian-speaking bay inhabitants.

The Yugoslavian anxious wish for post-war revenge towards Italy, that resulted in the destruction of the Venetian lion on the entrance to Kotor and its replacement with a 5-point star with the date 23 XI 1944, corresponding

to the day Kotor was freed from the Nazi, fascist invader, has actually expired decades ago, so the “Venetianity” of the buildings and other cultural symbols present in the Bay are considered valuable, instead of being something to hide or replace. Therefore, after the World War II (during which the anti-Italian wave of hatred resulted in the Saint Marc’s Leon destruction) – Italians in the Bay were not compared to the fascist occupants, and their culture was once again reevaluated. Such an attitude is completely and significantly opposite to the one that can be found in Dubrovnik, Croatia, the antique Ragusa Republic. Their local history museum tried to hide the fact that during past centuries, the language used in commerce and in official documents was Italian (called also “Veneto da mar”), and tried to legitimize the idea of a local Croatian identity which was supposedly alive *much before* the integration of the city into the Croatian republic, whose capital is Zagreb. In fact, in the eyes of the Croatian authorities, even today it is completely useless to value or even show any Italian residue: the country was born in 1991 as the Croats’ national state, following the traditional nationalistic pattern, and consequently the “Croatization” of their whole territory came very useful; also, it is relevant to mention that the admission of Croatia into the EU is not something that could happen in a far future but is pretty much an imminent reality, therefore this country does not need any help from Italy in this field. On the other hand, Montenegro could use an Italian sponsorship, and there are initiatives pointing in that direction: in June 2010 the Italian Foreign Affairs undersecretary in Podgorica, Alfredo Mantica, auspicated the making of an Adriatic-Ionic macro-region that could revive the political possibilities for South-Eastern Europe, with the possibility of admission of the Western Balkans into the EU. Following this idea, he announced that it is also necessary to continue the process of economical integration. According to Mantica, under the new Montenegrin presidency of the Adriatic-Ionic Initiative, the goal is to reach the completion of five protocols, including tourism, the environment and culture. The final goal is to make this Adriatic-Ionic region happen in 2014, in order to balance the weight that Northern Europe has in the EU, where there already is a Baltic macro-region, while there is another one being built on the Danube (cfr. The website *Vie dell’Est*, June 30<sup>th</sup> 2010).

Furthermore, the project of a so-called Porto Montenegro, a luxury tourism point, is coming to an end in the Kotor Bay. It consists of 24 hectares near the airport of Tivat, destined to accommodate a port with 650 boat spaces, including 150 for bigger yachts, and also two hotels, a residence and 500 habitation units – many of which are already sold (*Vie dell’Est*, July 14<sup>th</sup>

2010). As for Perast, its decadent and slightly sleepy image could soon go away, because its touristic potential has already been noticed. The town lacks in accommodation options, in beach facilities and its internal viability is heavily compromised during the summer season, because its main (and only) road is narrow and often cramped with cars. A possible solution to this problem was proposed in 2009 by an Italian company Appolonia, which pitched a project in collaboration with the Montenegrin Ministry of the Environment and Protection of the Sea and Territory, that could stop the traffic inside the town by building two parking lots, one at the entrance and the other one at the exit of the town itself. The internal mobility would be resolved and guaranteed by rent-a-bikes, electrical bikes, electrical cars and segways. This is a development project that is being presented as sustainable and functional not only for its commercial part, but also for the local population that would have no more problems of streets crowded with cars<sup>4</sup>. It is an initiative similar to others proposed for the Bay, that would transform the area already protected by the UNESCO inside the World Heritage Program; from a fascinating place full of Venetian residues, at the moment not very valued or protected and therefore available to the local population, and to a “pioneer” type of tourism – except for Kotor, which already gained world fame – to a place for an international economic élite, willing to spend money but only when offered high level service.

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<sup>4</sup> cfr. [www.viaggiareibalcani.net](http://www.viaggiareibalcani.net) , February 10<sup>th</sup> 2010.

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**REGION**  
*and*  
**REGIONALISM**  
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## **KOSOVO'S CULTURAL HERITAGE: UNBEARABLE WEIGHT OR FUNDAMENTS TO BUILD ON?**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In the European Union of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the main goal appears to be to deprive the state borders of their 'negative' value, in order to establish more economic and cultural relations between those who were separated before. In its recent history, the EU has also removed one of the last bureaucratic impediments, the "Schengen wall", which literally imprisoned the Balkan region, sentencing it to existence, which can be best described as a black hole, in the very heart of the modern world. Nowadays, the historical regions of Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia can join Croatia in the freedom of movement for their citizens; but most importantly, they can now be part of various interregional projects, and have become more interesting as potential cultural or tourist partners. This is something that the EU has tried to implement and encourage in each of its states: to preserve and protect the cultural heritage, but also to reinforce regional powers, by encouraging regional projects. However, there is still one small part of Europe that remains outside this picture: the newly created Republic of Kosovo. A small country with big problems, with a Muslim majority, that has an enormous cultural heritage going back in history for centuries and that could and should be preserved and transformed into a positive value. Yet, for as much as it undoubtedly has an enormous value, significant history and a string of its own myths on the Albanian side, for its ex-motherland Serbia, Kosovo is a 'bleeding heart', the very epicentre and cradle of Serbia's existence, home to historical legends and sacred temples. So, can a country learn to live without its own heart, when faced with its loss?

## 2. THE (UNBEARABLE) WEIGHT OF A LEGEND: JUST HOW IMPORTANT IS KOSOVO TO SERBIA?

As a true example of a nation-state, Serbia cannot be separated from its own history and myths. Kosovo has been considered as the ultimate, untouchable and sacred cradle of Serbia's whole existence, a sacrifice that cannot be forgotten or alienated, not without "betraying" the ancestors. So, what exactly is this myth? The *Kosovo Polje* (field of the blackbirds) is where the 1389 battle between the Ottoman forces and Serbia's military led by Prince Lazar took place. It was not just a common battle; the Sultan Murad I in person decided to fight alongside his soldiers<sup>1</sup>. It can be perceived as a classical good/evil myth scheme, with the final martyrdom act of both rulers lying dead once everything was over. The Serbs lost the battle, and the event has since been considered as an important turning point in Serbia's history, a sort of tragic omen marking the downfall of a glorious and "blessed" nation, succumbing to the "infidel" and mischievous dark forces – the Ottomans. History tells of the mere ending of an independent state and the beginning of a five centuries rule of the Ottoman empire over the Balkan area, but the extent of human and moral loss, together with the numerous Serbian aristocrats who lost their lives, have transformed the battle into a florid ground for the creation of lyric poems, written and oral myths, symbols of regret and God's unjust punishment that however has to be endured, in the light of Serbia's population being "chosen" for a better future. It was necessary to resist the dark despair that came down on Serbia, by creating hope that the Prince Lazar and his brave men did not die in vain. Consequently, the lieu of their demise had to be protected, never forgotten and always cherished as sacred ground.

The fact that the battle represented not only a collision of nations, but especially a collision of two religions – the Muslim and the Christian Orthodox – only added an ulterior component to the myth, justifying the hope for a better future (where God would rescue his own chosen people) and also planted a seed of future hatred and more complex conflicts to come. The religious collision theory has had its peak immediately after the battle itself, but has slowly shifted into a more national-based opposition, especially between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Emmert, 1992). In fact, this shift is evident particularly in the *Gorski Vijenac* (Mountain Wreath) written

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.kosovo.net/default3.html>

by Petar II Petrović Njegoš, the most famous Montenegrin ruler (both a Bishop and a Prince) from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The epic poem *de facto* recognized the martyrdom of the Kosovo *Serbians* and not exclusively Christians. The peak of the change can be dated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Serbia needed desperately to reinforce and stabilize its national and ethnic identity after 500 years of Ottoman rule. The extent of the mythological heritage that the Kosovo battle created was enormous: popular epic poems, dramatists, painters, sculptors, moviemakers, during the years the legend gained strength and was reinforced through history books, novels, and oral tradition within families<sup>2</sup>.



Photo 1. *Kosovka devojka*, by Uroš Predić

The reality of the battle and the loss were soon forgotten, and the only important thing was the martyrdom of the Prince Lazar (who in fact also became a Saint), God's chosen chevalier, who would resurrect one day as a new, charismatic leader, and would bring Serbia to its deserved glory (Pavlowitch, 2010, p. 24). In fact, 600 years later, on the occasion of the anniversary of the *Kosovo Polje* battle, Slobodan Milošević, the man who gained enormous power and skilfully used nationalistic rhetoric and mythical symbols to obtain the masses' consent, held a very infamous speech in front of an enormous sea of Serbs who came from all over Yugoslavia to celebrate the anniversary. The speech was conveniently held at the very Kosovo field,

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.kosovo.net/emmert2.html>

which certainly added to the mass hysteria and the feeling of ancient powers and myths coming alive (Pavlowitch, 2010, p. 255). Here is an excerpt:

“[...] At this place, at this place [repeats himself] in the heart of Serbia at the Field of Kosovo, six centuries ago, a full 600 years ago, one of the greatest battles of the time took place. As (?all great events) [*words indistinct*] many questions and secrets [*words indistinct*]. By the force of social circumstances this great 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo is taking place in a year in which Serbia, after many years, after decades, has regained its state, national and spiritual integrity. [...] Today, it is difficult to say what the historical truth about the Battle of Kosovo is and what legend is. [...] What has been certain through all the centuries until our time today, is that disharmony struck Kosovo 600 years ago. [...] The Kosovo battle contains another great symbol. This is the symbol of heroism. Poems, dances, literature and history are devoted to it. The Kosovo heroism has been inspiring our creativity for six centuries [*words indistinct*] and does not allow us to forget that at one time we were [*word indistinct*] brave and [*word indistinct*], one of the few that entered the battle undefeated. [...] Six centuries later, now, (?we are engaged in) battles and (?quarrels). They are not armed battles, although such things cannot be excluded yet. However, regardless of what kind of (?battles) they are, they cannot be won without resolve, bravery and sacrifice, without the noble qualities that were present here in the field of Kosovo in the days past. Our chief battle now concerns implementing the economic, political, cultural and general social prosperity, finding a quicker and more successful approach to a civilisation in which people (?will enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century).”<sup>3</sup>

Milošević’s ability to enflame and enchant the masses was very obvious before, but during this speech it appeared to be spectacular: he was, in fact, the new Lazar, promising to reunite the Serbs, to reinstall them to their rightful golden place in the world. The moment was critical, Yugoslavia was quickly failing and he grasped the opportunity to become a true leader in times of need, who would not hesitate to use anything (the mention of a possible armed conflict was all but casual) in order to honour the legend, the myth and the very essence of the Serbian nation. At the time, he was heavily endorsed by the Serbian Orthodox Church, which in history has always held its weight in maintaining the nation’s historical conscience alive: it is sufficient to mention how Prince/Saint Lazar’s remains have been taken

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.hirhome.com/yugo/bbc\\_milosevic.htm](http://www.hirhome.com/yugo/bbc_milosevic.htm) . The translation was done by the BBC.

all over Yugoslavia, to be shown and to be venerated by Serbs all around the country, before going back the monastery that originally kept them. In Serbia's history, religion has always had great importance, but we could certainly say that, following the Kosovo battle, it has been a constant and fundamental factor in those legends, myths, literature and other forms of art, that formed the national conscience. Such concept was brilliantly explained by Vjekoslav Perica:

"[...] Nation-states also cannot exist without history and myth, which also require a worshipful acceptance. Myth is a narrative about the origin, that is, 'birth' of the community. This narrative, often historically inaccurate, becomes *sacred*; that is to say, historical narrative becomes *religion* rather than history based on evidence." (Perica, 2002, p. 5).

Following this line of thought, the true birth of Serbia's nationalist spirit and its own, particular viewpoint regarding religion, was indeed the Kosovo Battle. It goes without saying that such an important myth, reinforced especially through popular epic poetry (which was unavoidably taught in schools since very young age, along with all the pride and solemnity such poetry brings) and religion, made a very solid ground for political exploitation of the moment (Čolović, 2002, p. 149). It became exponentially popular in times of war or conflict, as a mean of legitimization through examples of the past, identification in ancient heroes that infuse courage and spirit of sacrifice, and ultimately as a fundament for a new mythical lineage of "pure" Serbian genetics that had to be preserved against all external dangers threatening its existence. The concept of "the genes of the Tribe" has been promoted by Dr. Jovan Striković, a Belgrade hospital manager, who sustained the theory of a "scientific and philosophical basis [...] to the idea that a person acts, thinks and feels exclusively the way the genetic code of the community to which he belongs, determines" (Čolović, 2002, p. 161). Therefore, it is no surprise to discover the highlights of the very same idea in Milošević's Kosovo speech: it is always "us" against the virtual "others", who contrast Serbia's progress and sometimes menace its very existence. Such a theory has proven to be very dangerous, as history teaches, considering that Serbia has had to renounce its infamous dreams of a *Velika Srbija* (Big Serbia), not without however blaming unknown Western forces that have plotted against the small country and continue to do so, and that have helped the Bosnian wars demise, and ultimately the loss of Kosovo.

### 3. THE SERBIAN THERMOPYLAE

Through history, Saint Vito's day (June 28<sup>th</sup>) has seen significantly different scenarios in the same place: Gazimestan, the plain of the Kosovo Field, lieu of the 1389 battle. Here is a small scheme:

- 28<sup>th</sup> June 1389: The Kosovo Field battle, the Serbs' great loss and its symbolical value,
- 28<sup>th</sup> June 1989: Milošević's speech that awakened the never-sleeping Serbian nationalism: using history to legitimize contemporary politics,
- 28<sup>th</sup> June 2010: Independent Kosovo, Saint Vitus' day celebrations in Kosovo: an attempt to normality; Over 1.500 Serbs entered Kosovo, and went to Gazimestan, the historical lieu of battle.

The inevitable symbolic and the bitter results of history's merciless doings are obvious, and even more ironic considering the effort put into the creation and survival of the Serbian national identity, largely based on myths and legendary – but not historically accurate – events. On 17<sup>th</sup> February 2008, the long agony of Kosovo's history has come to an apparent end: the region has declared its independence from Serbia, and has since effectively severed connections with the Serbian state. As of January 2011, this auto-proclaimed state has been recognized by 74 out of 192 UN members together with the Republic of China. However, Serbia has not recognized its existence, and is actively fighting and boycotting any initiative towards a possible recognition or compromise. In fact, the matter is highly controversial, even after the ruling of the ICJ (Nardelli, 2010). The latter has allowed the legitimacy of this unilateral independence, but has not resolved effectively the true problem: what is the future of Kosovo, if its status is not negotiable, and how does Europe deal with the instability, hatred and political and social tensions that it has created? There is also the merely legal matter of such independence: the 1975 Helsinki Treaty and its Article 3 regarding the inviolability of frontiers, as well as the territorial integrity of States:

“[...] Art. 3 – The participating States regard as inviolable all one another's frontiers as well as the frontiers of all States in Europe and therefore they will refrain now and in the future from assaulting these frontiers. Accordingly, they will also refrain from any demand for, or act of, seizure and usurpation of part or all of the territory of any participating State. Art. 4 – The participating States will respect the territorial integrity of each of the participating States. Accordingly, they will refrain from any action

inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations against the territorial integrity, political independence or the unity of any participating State, and in particular from any such action constituting a threat or use of force. The participating States will likewise refrain from making each other's territory the object of military occupation or other direct or indirect measures of force in contravention of international law, or the object of acquisition by means of such measures or the threat of them. No such occupation or acquisition will be recognized as legal"<sup>4</sup>.

In the light of the already mentioned mythical and legendary importance that Kosovo has for Serbia, it is easily understood how something that crucial can become the very *raison d'être* of today's Serbian political élite, and how it automatically leads to Serbia's impossibility of letting Kosovo go. In the eyes of the population, after years of learning myths, Priština's independence is seen as a mutilation and a true apocalypse for the Serbian people. Kosovo has been defined as "Serbia's bellybutton" (Tacconi, 2008, p. 47) (also as "Serbia's heart") in many occasions, and the local politicians (more or less convinced) have all jumped on the bandwagon of the "assassination of the Serbian nation", and have also brought on the scene various plot theories where the International Community inevitably loses credibility by allowing Kosovo's independence, all the while depicting Serbia as the violent, savage party. In fact, this concept is best explained in words of Ivan Čolović:

"[...] This *topos* of the Serbian political myth, in which Serbia is opposed to rotten Western Europe as the guardian of authentic European values, may be interpreted today as a polemical response to the equally mythic representation of the West as the embodiment of justice, culture and prosperity, in which the Balkans and Serbia take on the inglorious role of representing backwardness, primitivism and barbarity."

Whether we agree or not on the actual legitimacy of the controversial independence, the reality of what has happened – and has been *de facto* legitimized both by international organizations and the precarious situation that had to be solved in some way – the loss of Kosovo presents itself as Serbia's own Thermopylae. Just as the original battle was lost to the Ottomans, today's reality faces Serbia to its own responsibilities too. After a war too many, in today's European society, there is no place for ulterior "black holes", especially not in the Balkan territory, whose strategic importance is significant. The EU policy appears to be not really solving the problem, but to solve the real question: how to get Serbia to "cooperate" and

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/osce/basics/finact75.htm> .

what can be given almost as a “reward”. Because of its position, natural resources and of course also because of its weight in the local matters between ex-Yugoslavian states, Serbia’s stability is vital to the European Union (Valmorbida, 2010). By allowing and getting to terms with Kosovo’s secession, Serbia could gain a lot of credit, which could be used as leverage and give long-term effect for its population. It would show good will and availability to enhance the region’s stability, and this would ease Serbia’s path to joining EU, which is really the ultimate goal for all of the ex-Yugoslavian states, and that until now has proven to be quite difficult.



Photo 2. “Kosovo is the heart of Serbia”, a popular campaign aiming to show Kosovo’s importance in popular belief. The scarf wrapped around the hands is vivid red, with Kosovar symbols in black all over: the red symbolizes both the heart-vital color and the Kosovo traditional colors. Image freely displayed on the internet

This political path appeared to be impossible in Serbia’s climate. In fact, after the UN General Assembly and the September 9<sup>th</sup> resolution regarding Kosovo, has definitely put an end to Serbia’s attempt to work on both Kosovo and joining the EU (Tadić, 2010). After EU lifted Serbia’s visa restrictions, which has vastly improved the spirits in the nation and has given true and visible hope, especially amongst the younger generations, and also after Serbia applied for EU membership on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2009, the country’s government has tried to campaign for their own resolution and defence on the Kosovo matter. The positive events have come to a halt after the ICU ruling, when it became evident that Kosovo was non-negotiable in the eyes of the international community. Despite the local politicians still



trying to play the “nation’s pride” card, there is a visible shift in the Kosovo myth situation: while it still lives in older generations, attached to their values (which is typical of uncertain or transition times), and also in school and intellectual literature, the “new” young Serbs do not show such attachment to Kosovo. In fact, with the exception of the ultra-right wing, what matters to them is having a better everyday reality, having opportunities and not having to feel emarginated despite living in the European continent. As in many myths before, Kosovo lives but shows signs of slowly shifting into a regret-type memory, immensely helped by the perspective of better life conditions. Whether the political élite is capable of grasping the opportunity and thinking long-term, that is entirely another matter. It certainly will not be an easy path, considering the heavy economic crises that Serbia is going through: without foreign investments (which do not come easily considering the extreme lack of stability and the image Serbia has among investors), the crisis could give grounds to the obvious refuge, and that is Serbia retiring to its safety shell – nationalism rhetoric, and obviously the revival of the Kosovo myths (Pantelić, 2011).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

*Myths make nations, and nations make myths* (Perica, 2002, p. 5).

The Balkan area has had a troubled history, with numerous conflicts, and has always been characterized by a multi-ethnic population. While the historical events and their consequences might have been the same for the ethnic groups who witnessed them, their perception has certainly been quite different. The makings of myths are almost always triggered by tragic events, with meaningful consequences that involve nations and inevitably change their destiny through centuries. In Kosovo’s case, the autonomous region with a very stormy past, that has witnessed bloodsheds and endured different governments, now there is the perspective of independence. Such conquest – as it is truly perceived by the local Kosovar population – does not come without a price. In fact, its recent history has produced turbulent conflicts which went on for years, more or less openly, and have finally lead to a controversial auto-proclaimed secession. The strong wish for “revenge over history” of Kosovo’s Albanians (Dérens and Geslin, 2007) has now granted them a new start, which will modify irreversibly the cultural heritage of the area. Kosovo has been known as a unique mixture of history, culture, various populations that have inhabited those lands, yet the obvious urgency to

resolve the conflicts puts the politics ahead of the possibility of a regional implementation through the rediscovery of its culture. The fact that the Serbian component of the local population has almost disappeared today changes the cultural outlook, and gives ground to the birth of new myths by disappearance of the old ones. The EU is firm on its position that Kosovo shall not have the possibility to be annexed to another state (meaning Albania), but neither it will go back to being an autonomous Serbian region. Considering how strongly Serbia feels about the land of its heroes, and the complicate matter of its Orthodox temples that have been in Kosovo for centuries, it is hard to imagine just how history will create new cultural heritage.

Serbia's task appears to be very difficult: myths are not easy to modify, and the Balkan area has a history of defending and preserving passionately each of its own. Despite this premise, there are signs that painfully, slowly, the nation perceives and accepts the loss, and is trying to think beyond, or more appropriately, is trying to think about everyday life and its possible improvement, due also to the fact that the current Serbian profound economic crises brings to a disillusionment of the population towards legendary but useless myths. Serbia is now facing one of the most delicate phases of its existence, being on the threshold of "civilized" Europe, yet having to renounce its past in order to create its future. The main problem will be finding new cultural heritage points to focus on, after the territorial adjustment, and that is something that has to come from within Serbia itself. The Kosovo region carries one of the richest but also one of the heaviest burdens of history in the world, whose components are defined by exclusion: one side's symbols are not the other one's. Yet, in a prospective of a multi-national, borderless Europe, there will have to be an adjustment: myths, rituals, symbols that defined one part by automatically excluding and alienating the other one will have to be "softened", by introducing a new policy of respect, and by changing the mentality that sees treason in respect, and calls for resistance to the 'others' even if that drives the nation into ruin. Only a country deprived of strong nationalist myths that border on obsession can allow itself to find new grounds for a quality future for its citizens, without damaging boundaries; a sort of de-ethnicization of history myths, all the while creating new ones, and *de facto* creating a healthier history through a healthier present.

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