THE 8TH EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

The Borderline Impact of the *Shanghai Cooperation Organization*:
A Non-Europeist Comparison between the EU and the SCO

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Abstract: While the concept of border change is easy enough to grasp, the comparison between two regions and their historic choice as to border management raises the key question of the nature of borders. Border change means, in essence, a change in that nature associated with a change in the perception of the border and of "the Other" as well as a change in the identity of the nations that make up a multi-border region. Europe and Central Asia are examined with no particularly exclusive focus but as illustrations of a more general purpose.

Keywords: region; region-building; border management; Europe; Central Asia; Asia

1. Introduction

Why compare European integration and central Asian (integrative) cooperation? Two reasons motivate such a comparison between two regions that seem at first so different in their past and present histories First, because comparisons enhance the understanding of human constructs and regions are man-made, that is to say they are created in order to alter the course of history. Second because, especially from a cross-border and trans-border perspective, borders in Europe have become mere functional crossings and borders in Central Asia since 1991 have become a particularly rich substance in search of, not of a model, but of inspirations.

Central Asians do not need Europe. Europe can at best be one of several sources of inspiration and perhaps an element of caution as to mistakes made in one case and to be avoided in another case. And so, this paper does not purport to provide an Europeist perspective but simply to suggest a comparison notably between legitimate questions to be asked. Has the EU abolished borders? Can the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) change the nature of borders, from nationalist to functional ones? There is a particular relevance in looking jointly at the (possibly) oldest or more advanced (?) regional process (in Europe) and the newest, most innovative (?) process (in Central Asia).

This paper covers two points, first the process of transformation of the substance of borders (I), second the resistance to that process, notably at the national level (II).

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2. The Transformation Process of Borders

2.1. Questioning the Nature of Borders as Vectors of War

2.1.1. Especially in Europe over History

The European setting illustrates rather well the fact that, on either side of borders, is located neighbors as natural dissenters and fighters. The history of borders is, to a large extent, the history of war, over the long-term too. After the imperial borders dissolved into those of the localized fiefdoms of the Middle Ages, lines of demarcation were imagined as borders of nation-kingdoms. The *Renaissance* was a rebirth of scientific and artistic creation but at the same time the birth of separate royal entities, that soon turned nations into nationalist contenders. The regime-changes to Republics in some national entities did not alter this aspect of things.

During four centuries, cross-border wars have raged in Europe, until a legally constraining form of integration was invented in 1950. Before that, despite the Westphalian peace invented in 1648, Europeans fought, destroyed and assured themselves of a mutual disintegration. The reasons for the wars were, by and large, always border-changes, sometimes associated with a royal wedding and a land-merger. Whether for the purpose of enlarging a kingdom, or to unify a linguistic community, or to resort to former lines of demarcation, Europeans have contested borders for as long as borders remained absolute values *per se*. The nature of borders as vectors of absolute power resulted in a status of borders as "triggerers" of war.

2.1.2. The Intra-Communist Borders after 1956

Certainly an outdated vision of the cold war is that of homogeneous blocs. Relevant enough to the nuanced suggestion is the fact that borders can be a vector of tension and of war even among allies. Internal borders within the USSR and within China are a case in point. And, with a particularly obvious relevance, one remembers the cross-border tension between the USSR and China as from the late 50s. This was the result not just of a misunderstanding or disagreement as to the nuclear issue in the 1950 Treaty of friendship but a question of deploying several divisions along the China, Mongolia border, in a gesture of hostility from the USSR vis-à-vis China, in the context of "big-brotherly interventions in Eastern Europe.

Other examples can indeed be mobilized. Political distinctions among allies have had a concrete consequence: cross-border intervention in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968. These marked the true nature of the Eastern bloc, as a vertical dynamic lead by the USSR among dominated satellites. Interestingly enough, in the West, this verticality also existed but in the form of US military bases opened and maintained in a number of allies. In this sense, the cold war did not directly result in a crossing of borders among enemies, except in Korea and Vietnam, but among allies and ideological partners. Physical borders already at the time of the cold war had begun to lose their role as lines of absolute sovereign divisions.

2.2. Advancing Regionalization as Border-Change

2.2.1. The Starting Point of the Shanghai Dynamic

The intricacy between a change in the very conception of borders and the emergence of regions is obvious. In the case of (central) Asia, this intricacy lies at the heart of the emergence of the Shanghai spirit of "good neighborhood". The agenda after 1991 was, first, bilateral settlements of border-

demarcation between China and her new neighborhood, and, second, in 1996 the creation of the Shanghai Five as a conclusion of the good advancement of these settlements. The pace of change was rapid and, even more relevant, the risk of border war not just avoided but subsumed into a superior common interest: to emerge from the demise of the cold war in a constructive manner.

Diplomacy was much involved, naturally, but also physical confirmation of national territories and explicit and concrete military disengagement over a meaning stretch of land: 100 km on either side of the borders. In this sense, cross-border management changes the conception and the substance of borders. Borders are no longer absolute (enemy) lines but become interfaces among nearing partnerships. Despite the critical view that these settlements were in the interest and to the advantage of China, which gained some tens of thousands of square kilometers, the process did not stop at border-management and is today becoming a regional construction with sectoral ambitions.

Furthermore, such a change is of lasting nature, this time-dimension being on second thoughts more attention-worthy even than the immediate escalation of tension.

2.2.2. The Irreversible Substance of Europe?

And so, neighbors become partners, against the grain of spontaneous international behaviors. History usually made neighbors enemies. New border-management turns neighbors not just into partners but into, first, natural partners, and, second, lasting partners, nay irreversible partners. This open-ended time-dimension is not sufficiently underlined in regional analyses. In the European construction in particular, but also in other regions, provisions for leaving the constructions (Community or Union) are blurring or absent. Partner-neighbors may have criteria for welcoming new members but do not envisage a falling-apart of their efforts.

This is logical as regional constructions are inspired, willing or not, by a need to overcome history. And so, whether slow or fast, the cross-border *rapprochement* among neighbors, the over-border exchanges among partners are meaningful in that they are conceived of as lasting. This is the crux of the difference with the alliances of the past until World War II. In the European case, probably the only exception is the 2005 Treaty over a European constitution that was not adopted. The SCO Charter also is an exception in the sense that it provided for the possibility of expelling a member or for a member to leave the Organization. But, to date, no example exists in the world of member-state leaving a region. Today's regions are built to last forever and maybe they will.[1] That is not to say that they are in the making without raising opposition or at least resistance.

3. The National Resistances to the Process

3.1. The Shifting Evolution of Borders

3.1.1. From "Sovereignist" to Customs, Fiscal, Eventually, *with Time*

These time processes are also part of stages. Whether linear or cyclical, history unfolds phase after phase. Europeans needed at least three centuries to make peace. Time matters, although time was not all. Europeans were unable to make peace until they accepted to face this incapability and turned nation-states into a region. Already in 1618 they launched a large-scale war that lasted thirty years.

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[1] Even NATO as sectoral, non regional entity, relies on an open-ended duration having survived the demise of its "counterpart" the Warsaw Pact.

The 1648 treaties of Westphalia invented a concept - sovereignty of the state -, meaning legal equality of all states, and its consequence: territorial integrity. By 1870, reality became again that of aggressively, not surprisingly by newly-born nation-states, Germany, as if birth required assertive expansionism. Then, 1914 and 1939 were just larger-scale manifestations of this European incapacity to implement border-peace among nations.

Only constraints lead Europeans to peace, in other words to a system by which they forcefully evolved towards constructivism. First, the constraint to realize that only peace could save Europe from a mutually-assured destruction. Then, the constraint of supra-sovereign law and law-enforcement courts vis-à-vis sovereign states empowered by Treaty with the capacity to sanction States – quite a violent blow to absolute sovereignty. This was a brutal breach of Westphalian authority but there was no choice. To save themselves from falling into post-war and post-colonial oblivion, in sixty years, European states have realized a *tour de force*: losing sovereignty for the benefit of mutually conducted stability and world-states maintenance.

This is what regionalization truly means, beyond politics and through the small steps advocated by Robert Schuman.

3.1.2. The *Slow* Impact of Borders as Conscience and Identity

So basic does this pattern seem to be - that "new" regions also undergo phases - that the issue for discussion is the pace of change rather than change itself. However, with regard to history, this can happen slower or faster. When Central Asian nations found themselves, in 1991, free to decide for themselves as post-soviet states, they managed to "skip" the trend of war for the benefit of the trend of constructivism. Yet, seeds of tension, notably interethnic, and grapes of war, notably anti-Russian, existed. But, resolutely, the fact that "there was no choice" - no other option but peace in order to avoid instability – lead, within 5 years only, to the Shanghai Five in 1996, then the SCO Six in 2001 and today's SCO"s Fifteen (six members, five observers, three partners, one guest).

In the meantime, in 2004 and 2005, special programmes were adopted by the SCO to fight against terrorism and to engage Afghanistan. The same years, the category of Observers to the SCO was created, in which first Mongolia (2004), and then India, Pakistan and Iran (2005) engulfed themselves. By 2009, the category of Dialogue Partner was also created, with soon Belarus and Sri Lanka in such a category. So, in all, between 2001 and 2009, that is in less than ten years, the region of Central Asia at large, with also South Asia and West Asia and China in East Asia was construed into an entity that makes sense. Even if integration in the European sense is still far ahead, the least one can say is that not only post cold war tensions were avoided but, quite clearly, Asian cooperationism is well under way.

It seems today that borders have definitely become vectors of peace, exchanges and future sectoral programmes, at one remote from the situations of the past.

3.2. The Sequential Imperative: Nation-States, then Region-States

3.2.1. Centuries in European Case: 1648, 1870, 1914/45, 1950: Wars then Peace

To suggest that the nature of borders has changed is logical. In the past already, borders evolved from zones of demarcation to lines of demarcation, from buffer-space to legally-agreed thresholds of sovereignty. With regionalization, borders lose their "absolute" nature and become functional. They

no longer separate but, on the contrary, they facilitate exchanges. Because the "protective" role of borders is displaced upwards to the region's external borders (and tariffs), inter-member borders become mere lines of administration, notably fiscal, civil and accounting borders. Free movement of goods, capital and people entails that the nature of borders becomes cooperative, integrative, "withering", no longer real land-marks.

This takes time, at least as to the implementation of the change. The decision to alter the nature of borders can be prompt (one year between the Schuman declaration of 1950 and the launching of the ECSC in 1951). The legal, administration and petty details of free movements, non-tariff obstacles and balancing-out of balances of trade agreements need time to feed into practice in a "digestible" and timely manner. However, slowness still relates to irreversibility. In this manner, the appraisal of the pace or of the success or of the efficiency of regional dynamics ought not to be measured according to rapidity and promptness but according to the deepness of the agreement – or better put: "agreeing" - among partners. The European Union, is this sense, is above all the dynamic "uniting" of Europe.

Partners have invented a new form way to interact over time and with time, in order to last as neighbors of a new kind.

3.2.2. Decades in Central Asian Case: 1991, 1996, 2001, 2004, 2012: CW to Region

Such evolutions within the very substance and meaning of borders affect minds. Citizens but also leaders start to think differently of neighbors with, first, the message that borders no longer mean obstacles, and, second, that the physical dismantling of customs barracks and officers is necessarily and logically part of it. This is echoed in a change of perception both of Self and of the Other. Again, this takes time. Especially in Europe, where fear or disdain for the neighbor has so often meant aggressive antagonism and military conquests - two of which escaladed and turned into world wars - to change one's mind and begin to turn cross-borders exchanges into institutional constructivism triggers a sense of identity-change.

Gradually, what it means to be European, Asian, African, American … becomes a new reference. One can still retain a national (and local) identity while adding an effective level of regional identity. Naturally, this degree of perception-alteration is inter-generational; at least it takes place more easily from one generation to the next. French born in 1899 will accept less easily a friendship or marriage with a German than his or her grandson or great-grand daughter. An Englishman and a Frenchman or more generally a northern European and a southern European shall trust each other less than citizens of the same sub-region within Europe, yet with time since 1950 the perception that being European is conducive to enrichment in multi-identity has made headway.

It seems that, in the case of Europe, border-change has occurred before mentality-change. The sequence is still unclear in the case of Central Asia, where, yet, border-management is a success and multi-national societies are monitoring rather peacefully their differences.

4. Conclusion

In **conclusion**, what matters is to dwell on facts and to make sense of reality. Twenty years ago, the vacuum left by the demise of the cold war suggested that the European construction offered a particularly relevant example of "what to do" henceforth. In the span of 20 years, almost as many

regional dynamics have sprung forth (reactivated or created anew). Today, in Asia, not just Central Asia, one such dynamic, the Shanghai process, is imposing itself as the dominant one.

Naturally, the Shanghai spirit - the SCO - cannot overcome overnight the reality of inter-state borders. In a way, border-controls have become extremely tight between formal Soviet Republics, also vis-à-vis China, notably with Afghanistan due to the imperative fight against traffics and terrorism. However, already something has changed, which can be conceptualized as "cross-border behavior" or even "cross-border" *habitus*.

To take but one example, the Osh peak of tension in 2010 in Kirgizstan yielded to the Shanghai principle of multilateral non-intervention. Yet, probably, the Kirgiz authorities would have considered a stabilizing influx of order-maintenance maybe from Russia, at the very time when Moscow is still contemplating playing an active role in bilateral security. The fact that, on the SCO guidelines, no intervention in domestic affairs took place (although in Kirgizstan, it was Uzbeks under violence) bears testimony to the changing, yet still ambiguous nature of cross-border influences by a regional body in Asia.

This conference in Romania, in the heart of Europe, is a wonderful occasion to air some of these impressions and hypotheses relating to a changing world for a changing Europe and a changing Asia.

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The Journalistic Information about the European Union

The Journalistic Interest of the European Matters in Three European Countries Media: Poland, Romania and Spain

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Abstract: Three European research teams from the academic field meet to study the interest of media in matters concerning of the common European space. The results show that the European Union and its member countries do not constitute, at the moment, a usual priority issue in informative agendas of analyzed media in Poland, Romania and Spain. These results can be deduced of the analysis of the indicators of journalistic interest, such as, for example: the priority use of routine news to cover the European events; the low media interest in the Europeanist debate; the insignificant percentage of European news that media highlight on their front pages or summaries; the reduced length or extension of the majority of European news, the lack of an accurate knowledge by citizens of who is behind the spread news.

Keywords: European Union; media; informative agenda; indicators of journalistic interest

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1. The Disinformation about the European Union

The EU is, without a doubt, the most successful of the supranational integration organizations, with vocation and interest in economic, social and, of course, political sectors, and we cannot forget, besides, its achievements in the field of citizen rights and also in the external relationships. [Translated to English language]

These words of Cabezuelo Lorenzo (2004, p. 411) are significant because reflect well the feelings of many defenders of the Europeanism. Many intellectuals from diverse fields of knowledge (History, Sociology, Law, Economy…) claim, by an historical nature, the existence of a common European space. But to get the consolidation of this common space, in an institutional and civil level, it is necessary that information flows free and reach to all the EU citizens, to get that society knows clearly what is the meaning of being a member of the European Union and what the effects of this condition in their lives are.

From 1950 (year of the *Declaration of Schuman*, countersigned by Jean Monnet in 1952), the EU has tried to keep an open informative policy in its actions, holding on a complex structure of institutional community communication, reflected on periodical publications (Official Journal of the European Communities, Bulletin of the EU, Eurobarometer, Euro-stat…) and many databases (CELEX, BACH, Eurybase, OEIL, SIMAP, TED…).

These publications and databases which constitutes, as Cabezuelo (2004, p. 424) says, "only a parcel of the activity developed by agents of the diverse European institutions to create in the public opinion an image or vision favorable to the institutions of the EU", have an inconvenient: its limited projection on citizenship. In other words, such publishing and databases are not often consulted by all the citizens, but only by a select group of professionals and researchers who need to get new information about the progresses in the diverse issues treated or covered by the European Union. In this way, the information about the big work done by the European institutions to make real a European common project overlooks for the big part of Society, and it impede the flowering of an "Europeanist feeling" among the European citizens.

Having in mind this effort and volume of documental production, there is no doubt that we cannot attribute to the EU a lack of worry by an approximation to citizens and let them know the daily task of this supranational organization. However, we can reproach to the EU its incapacity, observed until now, to create successful common policies which reach to all citizens.

There is a prove of this affirmation in the results of the Euro-barometer 2011, where it is said that exist among the community citizens a majorly feeling (73%) of lack of a good level of information about the European matters. And this lack of information can cause, as a direct consequence, the deterioration of the Europeanist feeling of citizens and a tendency to forget or neglect the European matters in pro of the national matters. This reality, besides, is usually linked to the circumstances, so it can be increased in periods of crisis (as the actual economic crisis), being even possible "to favor to the anti Europeanist movements" (Fournier, 2013).

But it exist also other signs like these. For example, studies of opinion developed in Spain by the Center of Sociologic Research (CIS) about the anti Europeanist attitude of Spanish citizens, show the progressive deterioration which is suffering the interest of Spanish citizens in the matters concerning on the EU. In this way, for example, while on the *Barometer about the EU* in 2000 the 56.1% of the survey population think that news about the EU has a low or lucking interest for them, in the exploration developed after the elections to the European Parliament in 2009 the percentage of population which has this same opinion increased until the 57.7%.

Equally significant is the contrast in the percentages between 2000 and 2009 about the Europeanist attitude or the conscience of being a European citizen: in 2000, only a 6% of the survey population in Spain feels as European citizens. And this low percentage decreased more progressively until the 5.2% in 2009. From this data we can conclude it is evident that: firstly, the interest of Spanish citizens by the European matters is low; and, secondly, few Spanish citizens feel like European citizens. And this reality crash head on with the fact that decisions made in a European field influence decisively in the daily life of citizens from any European country.

Therefore, in this context, it seems that something go wrong in the European construction, maybe not much in a political level, but in the social one. The European Union do not get to penetrate in people in spite of its informative machinery, so it must look for new formulas if it want to reach to the public opinion and to get citizens, and not only the political stratum, feel and defeat the European common project as a project of neighborhood and siblinghood among people. And, in our opinion, one of those new formulas must be supported in the decisive role played by media in society. In this regard, Sotelo González comments (2004, p. 430):

> Without a doubt, media intervene unquestionably in the social processes and, in this case, also the informative treatment of the community matters. The paths of deepening in the process of European integration opened by political authorities have brought new scenarios which media have had to respond to and are still doing it. [Translated to English language]

To reach to citizens, it is unavoidable necessary the collaboration of media, as Muñoz Torres explains (2002, p. 271):

> Media build, almost imperceptibly, in a 'macro' scale the vision of the world by means of their daily decisions about what will be published and the way of do it […] It urges to recognize media build sense in each step; besides, they are the main source of sense for the current man. [Translated to English language]

In reality, are media which have the capacity of activate the public opinion by means of their journalistic messages, as the *Hahn Report*, presented by the Legal Commission of the European Parliament (Sánchez, 1989, p. 19), recognized in 1982. This report says, among other things, that:

> The European unification will not be achieved without the will of Europeans, what suppose a European conscience, impossible without the appropriate information, nowadays tributary of national media. [Translated to English language]

In the words of Sánchez Bravo (1989, p. 31): "Without European information there is not European community". But if, on the one hand, we are affirming citizens do not have enough information about the EU and, on the other hand, we tell media play a significant role in this sense, what it seems to be deduced of our words is media are currently collaborating with Europeanist project, but they are not journalistically 'interesting' in doing it. And this is a delicate affirmation which needs to be proved.

2. Objectives of Research

Precisely to check this hypothesis about the relative interest media currently show about the matters concerning to the European Union and its member countries, our three European research teams from the academic field. A media interest, in our opinion, insufficient – as we will demonstrate in this work –, but which, however, does not seem as perceived in this way by citizens if we pay attention to the

Eurobarometer 2011. According to this exploration, most European citizens opine different media (press, radio and television) spread news about the EU and, besides, they do it objectively. In this way, citizens forgive media because of their lack of information about the European Union´s matters. But ¿why this discrepancy between our observations and the perception of citizens?. Perhaps the response we will find it in the fact that, as many authors consider, Fontcuberta (1993, p. 35) among them:

> Media have converted into the main instigator of the circulation of knowledge. Citizens of the actual civilization coexist with them and media are for them a very important point of reference. People talk about what media talk about and they ignore the events which happen further than an immediate environment, which have not received the description of newsworthy. It have been even said that anything is not in media, does not exist or it is not important. [Translated to English language]

And, without a doubt, that is right. If media, the most direct link with citizens to let know the current affairs, do not give enough journalistic interest and do not convert into newsworthy the duties of the European institutions to reinforce the Union, citizens can understand – as it happens currently – that *everything* what is important it is talked about the EU. We cannot forget that many people give to media an exaggerated credibility, glimpsing them as resources of information with an unquestionable authenticity and frankness.

Before continuing, we consider important to require two things: firstly, given the big number of variables we have observed in our exploration of media, it is not possible for us the collection of all our results and conclusions in an only paper. That is why, in this occasion, we focus our attention only on the indicators of informative interest which media show about the European matters. Secondly, with our research, we do not pretend to do an exhaustive study which is representative of all the European journalistic universe, but just to contribute, a bit more, to studies about the journalistic diffusion to citizens of the important matters which concern them in a European level and, most of all, we do not want people forget the big social responsibility media have in this issue.

3. Methodology of Research

As we indicated before, our three research teams from the academic field meet to compare data and results obtained from media of our respective countries. The participant universities in the research were: the University of Silesia, in Katowice, the University of Bucharest and the University of Seville.

To accomplish this joint research, some basic methodological patterns were agreed. Thus, we decided, to cover the major quantity and variety possible of population, to analyze one media for each journalistic format: press, radio and television. Besides, we decided, to analyze the journalistic messages which reach – and persuade – to people in a major measure, to study media with a national diffusion and with the highest levels of audience at the beginning of our research, independently of the business group these media belongs to. And, finally, we also agree the period of the research along one month, so the corpus of collected documents is significant and it gives us enough information about the objectives of our study.

Thus, the three teams analyze in our respective countries, along 32 days (from the 21st January to the 21st February 2013), the following media:

- Poland: the newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza*; the television channel *Fakty TVN*; and the radio station *RMF FM*;

- Romania: the newspaper *Adevărul*; the television channel *ProTV*; and the public radio station of Romania;
- Spain: the newspaper *El País*, the Spanish public television channel *TVE1*, and the Spanish public radio station *RNE*.

Finally, we consider also convenient to indicate that, in the case of television channels and also in radio stations, we decided to explore the news programs at *prime time*, that is the programs which reach to a collective more numerous of citizens.

4. Indicators of the Informative Interest of Media in the EU and Its Member Countries

To examine the informative interest which events about the EU and its member countries awaken in analyzed media, we consider important to have in mind four basic indicators, such as:

- Predominant journalistic genres;
- The preferential or not location of news inside newspapers and television or radio programs;
- The length dedicated to news about Europe;
- The journalistic sign on news about Europe.

4.1. Journalistic Genres of the Pieces of Information about the EU and Its Member Countries

According to the first indicator, the journalistic genre which media use to cover the European matters, we focus our attention on the classical informative genres (news, interview and report) and also in the traditional opinion genres (editorial and comment). We also observe the presence of other journalistic genres in the coverage of the European information as, for example, the chronicle or the letters to the Editor. But given the low presence of these other genres in news with a European content, we decided to collect them under the name of "other genres", focusing thus on the main genres: news, interview, report and opinion.

As we can observe in the next figures (**Figures 1a, 1b and 1c**) the results show that in Spain and in Poland, the most used genre by all media (press, radio and television) is news, to the detriment of other informative genres such as the interview or the report, being more significant these data in Spain than in Poland. The same happens with the Romanian press, but not with its television channel or radio station, which use the report as the main genre. Nevertheless, in this last case, we consider important to clarify that, instead of authentic reports, they are news based on reports made by a correspondent or a journalist from the media. As these pieces of information are between the news and the report, we decided finally to collect them in the report category, because we thought there is a documentation and an investigation work not usual inside the routines of the news production.

According to these results, it is evident that – except the Romanian audiovisual media – in Romanian press, in all Spanish media and also, although to a lesser extent, in Polish media, the European matters do not seem to have enough journalistic importance to "waste" in them all the investigation display that an in depth report requires. But it is also probable that the use of the news as the main predominant genre does not mean a negligent conduct by these media to the European information, but the current tendency of these media to cover in their daily informative agendas a wide spectrum of contents to satisfy the informative expectations of an audience more heterogeneous every day.
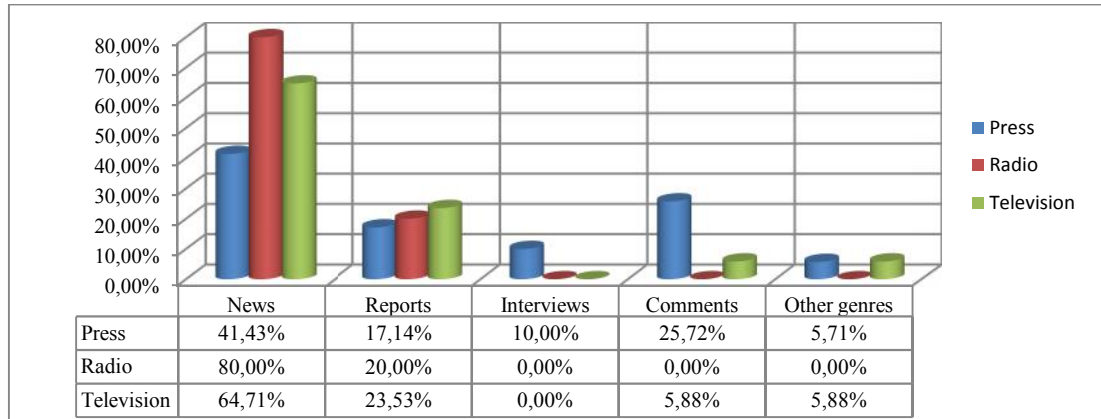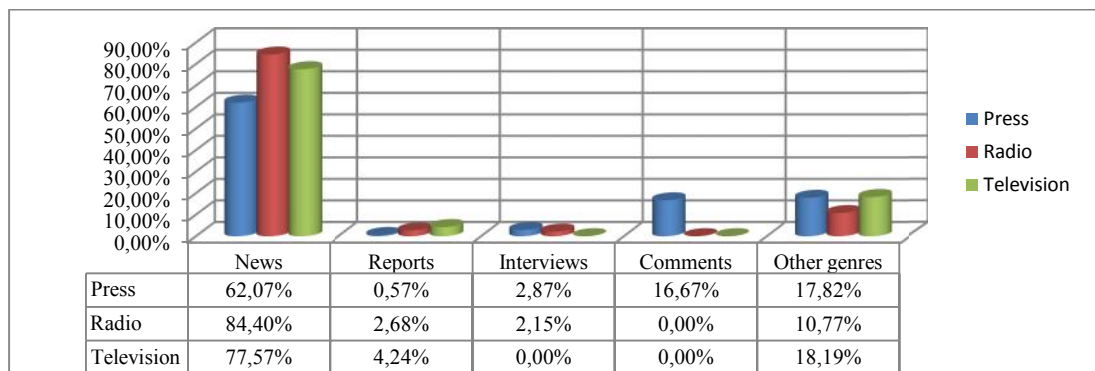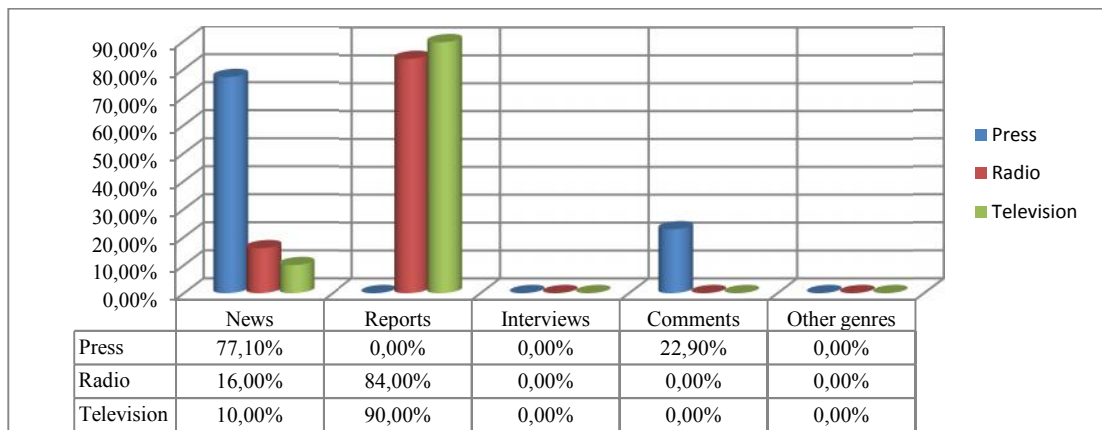
Figure 1a. Journalistic Genres. Poland

	News	Reports	Interviews	Comments	Other genres
Press	41,43%	17,14%	10,00%	25,72%	5,71%
Radio	80,00%	20,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%
Television	64,71%	23,53%	0,00%	5,88%	5,88%

Figure 1b. Journalistic Genres. Spain

	News	Reports	Interviews	Comments	Other genres
Press	62,07%	0,57%	2,87%	16,67%	17,82%
Radio	84,40%	2,68%	2,15%	0,00%	10,77%
Television	77,57%	4,24%	0,00%	0,00%	18,19%

Figure 1c. Journalistic Genres. Romania

	News	Reports	Interviews	Comments	Other genres
Press	77,10%	0,00%	0,00%	22,90%	0,00%
Radio	16,00%	84,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%
Television	10,00%	90,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%

It is true that media cannot inform about 'everything'. In fact, they cannot even cover the most newsworthy events. They have necessarily to select a piece of reality, their piece of reality, building an own symbolic environment where their audiences participate in it. But, in our opinion, this symbolic environment should not be built, systematically, over the basis of the thematic dispersion, but it should have informative areas in which the journalistic quality takes precedence over the quantity. As a Spanish proverb says "who cover a lot, squeeze little", but the European information is too much important for our citizens –because it affects to their lives- and it should not be treated in a fast and superficial way.

Another significant result, common for the three countries, is the limited – or, even, inexistent – number of interviews made to figures linked to the European Union. The interview is the most optimal way to present in society to the responsible figures who manage the EU institutions. Thanks to the interview, citizens can know in a more direct, more personal and in a closer way these public figures who drive the helm of the European ship. The knowledge of who are these figures (whose names resound), how they think about, what they do for the European common framework, what they are worry about, etc. is a way to familiarize to the audiences with our European responsible politicians.

This low percentage of interviews detected in media has a double possible reading: on the one hand, it can denote the low journalistic interest in giving "humanity" to the cold and dark entity which supposes the "European Union"; on the other hand, it can denote the low interest of the own EU politicians in the knowledge of them in their condition of individual by European citizens.

A last consideration about the journalistic genres which has powerfully attracted our attention is the priority that newspapers, television channels and radio stations give to the informative genre to the detriment of the opinion one. In this sense, in Spain and in Romania we can find comments about the EU and its member countries just on newspapers and in a low percentage. Just in the case of Poland we have occasionally (5.88%) observed the use of the opinion genre by the Polish television channel to cover issues concerning of the EU or its member countries. About radio, data are devastating: none of the researched radio devotes to opine publicly about European matters in their daily news programs.

These data can suggest: on the one hand, that media prefer an impartial and apparently objective discourse when they cover the European information; or, on the other hand, that media do not give to the news about the European common space a necessary journalistic interest to value them and to convert them into issues of debate in the public opinion, as Sotelo González suggests (2004, p. 433):

> The absence of debate about very important community matters shows a very significant fault. There is a lack of debate, confrontation of ideas and dialectic confrontation, elements which are a big basis of progress, in the field of the European construction. [Translated to English language]

4.2. The Location and Extension/ Duration of News about the EU and/ or Its Member Countries

In our opinion, another two significant indicators about the importance that the analyzed media companies in our respective countries give to the information about the EU and/ or its member countries are those related to the location on their covers or summaries and within its pages and news, and also the *extension* / *duration* of the news.

Regarding the first indicator mentioned, that is the *location* on the cover or summary, we can observe (**Figures 2a, 2b, 2c**) the low percentage of news about the EU or its member countries that the explored media stand out in a preferred place of their media (newspapers or news).

Undoubtedly, the most notorious case is the Romanian television¸ *ProTV*. Over the 32 days of analysis has not broadcast any news regarding the common European space. In this sense, it is remarkable the tiny percentage of news about the EU and / or its member countries that the analyzed European newspapers show on their covers: the Polish newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza*, only 11.76%, the Spanish newspaper *El País*, 8.62% and the Romanian one, *Adevărul*, 12%.

If we consider the covers of the newspapers, as well as the summaries of the television and radio news, as the "window" used by the media to present to their audiences the most relevant information of each

day, it is clear, based on data, that news concerning to the common European space are barely given priority in the daily news agendas of the Polish, Spanish and Romanian analyzed media.
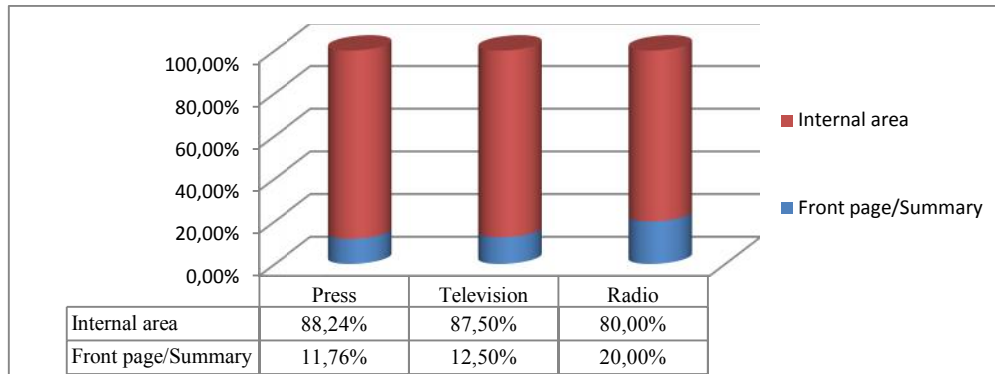
	Press	Television	Radio
Internal area	88,24%	87,50%	80,00%
Front page/Summary	11,76%	12,50%	20,00%

Figure 2a. Location on Cover/ Summary of EU News. Poland

	Press	Television	Radio
Internal area	91,35%	72,12%	62,37%
Front page/Summary	8,62%	27,88%	37,63%
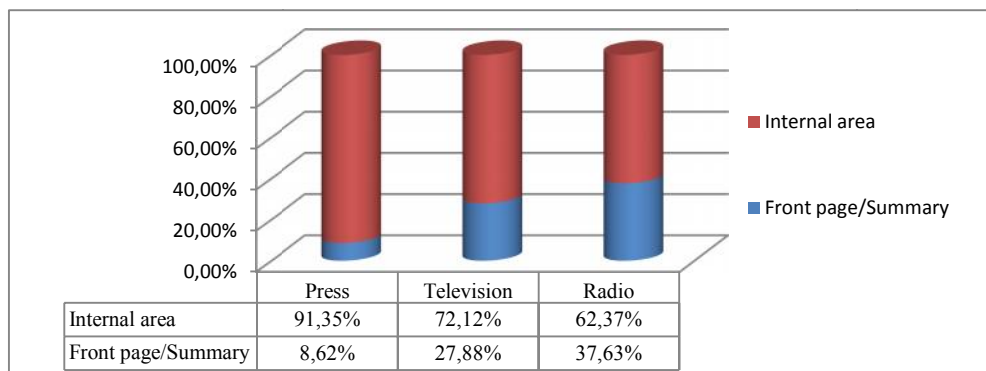
Figure 2b. Location on Cover/ Summary of EU News. Spain

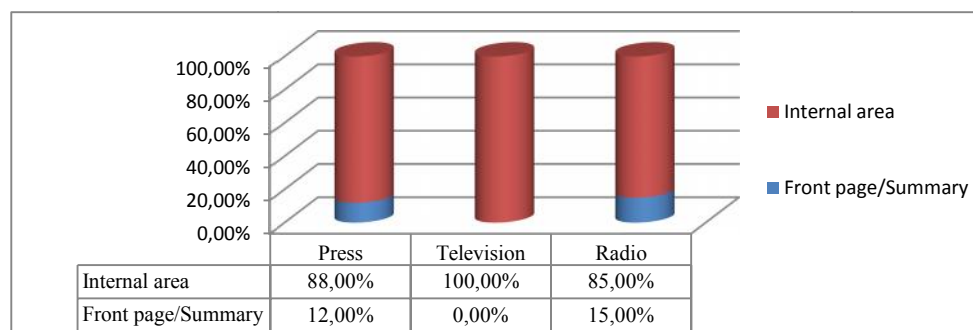|	Press	Television	Radio
Internal area	88,00%	100,00%	85,00%
Front page/Summary	12,00%	0,00%	15,00%

Figure 2c. Location on Cover/ Summary of EU News. Romania

On the other hand, focusing on the disposal of the European news within the internal body of the journalistic support, the results reveal that, in the daily press of the three countries, the news are most commonly located on the first pages or central ones-coinciding, assiduously, with the *International* section, and, rarely, in the last pages. However, in the radio stations in the three countries, as well as Polish and Spanish televisions, the European news have no fixed location, but they are located at any time of the news, where they are more suitable for its thematic content. The most significant case is the *ProTV* Romanian television, always placing the European news in the last section of the news, *International* section, preceded by social news and followed, in turn, by entertainment news.

These data suggest that open debate in journalism about whether European information must be provided or not as a specialized area of journalism (Sánchez Martínez, 1994,p. 81), has not yet reached the professional field of mass communication, which, in most cases, tend to identify issues touching

on the EU and / or its member countries as 'foreign' news, even though such news are associated, especially in the case of radio and television-like already noted-, to other specialized sections as politics, economics, events, courts, environment, culture, sports, etc.

That happens because, according to Sotelo González (2004, p. 434), "in community affairs all specializations are covered, so the Community information is a set of informative specializations not subsumed to a single specialty." For this reason, "the margin left for the appearance of a proper and specific specialization in community affairs is minimal".

However, agreeing with this statement, we also think that to continue addressing issues as international news itself may involve the risk that European citizens do not ever identify and recognize themselves as members of the common space. If "our European news" is located within the same context, and at the same level that news concerning European countries suburbs, as may be Russia or the United States, the nationalist feelings of the European citizens will continue taking precedence over European feelings. From the journalistic field, we must try taking steps to create a stage of collective European entity that permeates audiences. In other words, to start generating a common social identity to all citizens of the European Union, which reach far beyond politics and economics, as nowadays.

Finally, the indicator of the *extension/ duration* of the EU news and/ or its member countries show, depending on the journalistic support, that:

- *Press*: In the Polish newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza*, a significant percentage of the published news (46.27%) have quarter of a page area, while in the case of Romanian newspaper (*Adevărul*) and Spanish (*El País*) the highest percentage of news corresponds to those that have an area that ranges between half a page and the three-quarter page, although this percentage is more pronounced in the Spanish newspaper (85.06%) than in the Romanian one (52%). Rarely, we have found news that exceeds the length of a page. The general rule in the field of print news seems to be the use of news that offers to the readers timely information about what is happening at European level, without going deeply into the various issues narrated;

- *Radio:* Most of the news broadcast on Polish radio station *RMF FM* and Romanian public radio have duration of between 25 and 70 seconds. The Spanish public radio station (*RNE*) often provides more time to the European news, placing most of them in the time interval between 90 and 120 seconds. What we have been found in the three radio networks explored is that all of them rarely devote more than 120 seconds, or more than two minutes, to information about the EU and / or its member countries. This fact matches with what we have seen before in the press, suggesting also that the radio informs about European affairs without going into depth on them;

- *Television:* Finally, in the Polish network Fakty TVN, the average length of the news ranges between 120 and 300 seconds, while in Romanian ProTV channel, most of the EU news has a transmission time of about 100 seconds. Regarding the Spanish channel TVE1, the higher percentage of European news corresponds to those having duration of between 60 and 120 seconds. We see that, except for Polish channel, Romanian and Spanish television follow the same path set by the press and radio to broadcast on their news only basic data for that the audience feel informed of the main matters falling under the common European space.

Summarizing: first, the media do not highlight European news; and second, the media give to European news a *distant* focus (*International* section) as if they were something distant to their readers

or audiences; third, the media do not elaborate European news in depth (which is deducted from the limited extension or duration of most of them). We can conclude that the media draw current European Union and its member countries with a fine brushwork, without giving them greater importance, reaffirming our initial hypothesis: the analyzed media companies in the three countries provide little attention to events that take place in the European sphere to which we belong, paying more attention to the national information.

That was observed, for example, by our Romanian team in *ProTV* Romanian television, where community news in which Romania was not the main protagonist lasted a minimum time (between 20 and 62 seconds), while, by contrast, the pieces where Romania itself was the central theme were given the maximum possible time.

It is clear that, in general, the Polish, Romanian and Spanish analyzed media do not care about contextualizing the information coming from our European geopolitical environment and explaining to their audiences in depth what does it means to be a European citizen and what means to be within the framework of the EU.

4.3. The Journalistic Authorship of the European Information

A final indicator that shows the interest that the media give to information on Europe, are the journalists who sign the news spread about the common European space.

The results **(Figures 3a, 3b and 3c)** show that the percentages of European news appearing signed in the media analyzed (Polish, Romanian and Spanish) are high. Although this information is very valuable and positive, we have to handle it with caution. The firm is not necessarily always synonymous with "ownership" of information.

The degree of responsibility of the journalist in the news will be determined mainly (López-Hernández & Domínguez-Delgado, 2012, pp. 791-792) by the fact that:

- First, it was he himself who has covered and written information, so that the authorship of the piece is clear and obvious;

- Second, although the news has not been covered personally, the journalist has contrasted, verified, contextualized and / or completed the information, research effort that makes the journalist, explicitly or implicitly, to make its mark in the information;

- And third, the degree of responsibility is also determined by the fact that the journalist was involved only in the syntactic correctness of the text to avoid duplication with other media. This often occurs when news is served by the agencies or the communication offices. Naturally, in this case the author cannot be considered a journalist, but a mere transcriber. As Felix Ortega argues (2008, p. 236): "Journalists, in this case, become mere disseminators of ideas created by others, so that their role is reduced to the same that performs any bureaucrat within a corporation."
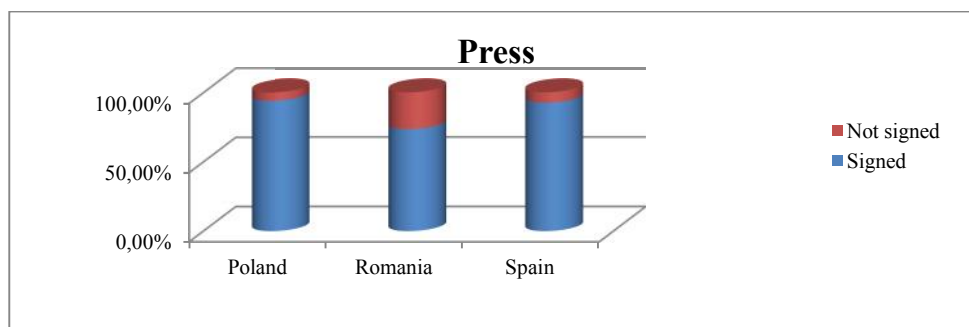
Figure 3a. Journalistic Signature of the European News
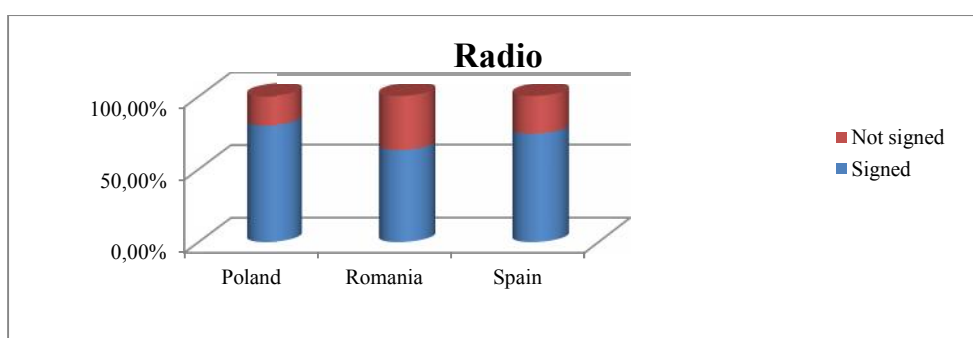
Figure 3b. Journalistic Signature of the European News
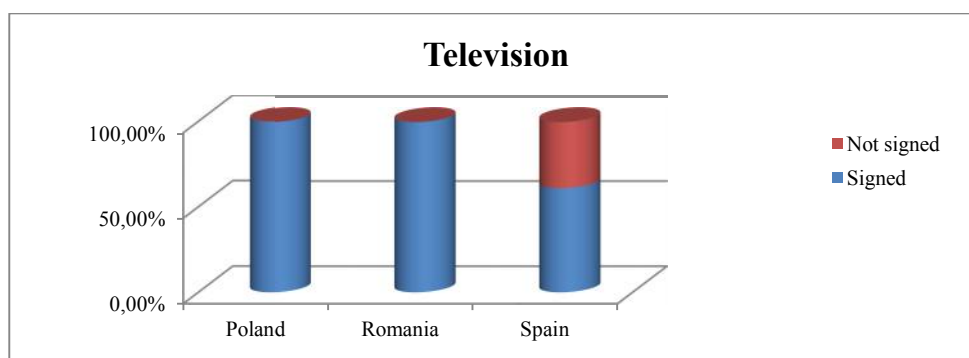
**Figure 3c. Journalistic Signature of the European News**

Logically, if the media uses several times the term "agency" or the name of the institution or organization whose cabinet has forwarded the information, citizens end up thinking - and not without reason- that the information provided by the media is a rather pour job. In addition, the lack of journalistic signature depersonalizes, causing the reader or the audience to see the event narrated as impersonal, of what can and cannot trust, because they do not know who is telling it. Thus, whether he/she is the author or not, it is always advisable that the news appears signed by a journalist. The problem which then arises is: who is really behind community news? Romanian researchers could ensure that the almost all EU news broadcast on *ProTV* were taken from international news agencies, what, in their opinion, ratify the lack of interest of this chain for the community affairs.

Given the impossibility of knowing the responsibility degree of journalists to sign European news, we decided to observe the frequency of the journalists' signature over the 32 explored days. This variable helps us to find out if the media has journalists working assiduously with information from the European Union. If so, we could deduce the degree of specialization of journalists in different European themes.

Having journalists who are responsible for European news is very important for citizenship. The assiduous journalistic firm in European news is a prerequisite for developing a closer to the citizen - journalism, with which the audience can feel identified and sure to be well informed. That is, the press coverage of European affairs requires not a "giant headless" but ethical journalism to say, with clarity, openly, who is behind the news.

However, certain media does not seem to share our own point of view, as can be seen from the results obtained in our research. The most striking case is, undoubtedly, the Spanish media (**Figure 4**), in which the percentage of journalists who sign only once during the entire month is significantly high (above 60 %) and also, surprisingly similar in all media.

The results of the Polish press and television, but not the radio, are close to those obtained in the Spanish media, although their percentages (47.82% and 45.45% respectively) are not as categorical. Still, they are significant as they show that almost half of European news published in the 32 days analyzed is signed by casual or sporadic journalists.
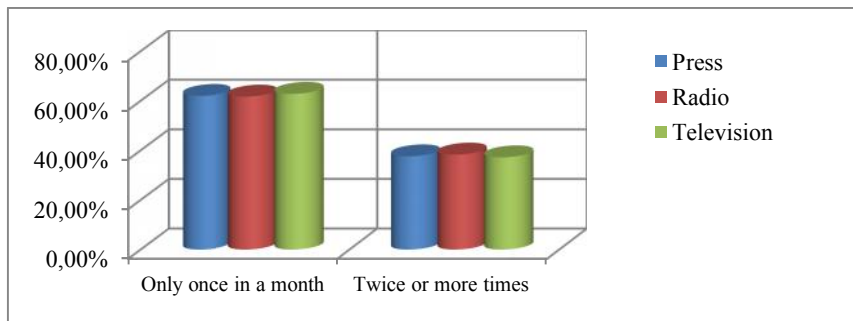
Figure 4. Frequency of Occurrence of the Same Firm Journalism. Spain

This data may be telling us that many of the European news published or broadcast by the media are "canned news." That is, news that is not covered by its journalists personally, but from agencies or institutional press offices. If this were the case, citizens also have the right to know it, because if all media rely on news agencies to reflect European news, there is a high risk of homogenizing the information landscape and provide one distorted image, or at least not entirely truthful, suggesting that all the same news broadcast because "there is nothing more important to tell." And this would explain the results of the Eurobarometer 2011, to which we referred in the Objectives section research, and in which, as we recall, it was said that European citizens believe that the different media (press, radio and television) broadcast enough news about the European Union and, further, that such items are dealt with objectivity.

Finally, on the Romanian press and radio investigated, the most notable are their opposing positions:

-   In the newspaper *Adevărul*, the fact that a high percentage (73.49%) of the articles were signed by columnists or well known public figures, as Ion Ioniță, Elena Dumitru, Crăciun Andrei Andrei Pleşu, etc.., demonstrates the interest of the media to strengthen its influence - or even their indoctrination capacity;

-   However, the Romanian Radio seems to act more like a "headless giant," as we noted before, not usually detailing publicly the name of the journalists on their retransmissions, except when they write reports about European matters dealt.

5. Conclusion

With the results of this work, seems to be more than obvious that, except for the specific exceptions to which we referred in the text, the European Union and/ or its member countries are not, for the moment, a priority in the news agendas of the media analyzed in Poland, Romania and Spain.

And this is evident in the observed newsworthy indicators, such as: the preferred use of current news to cover events in Europe; the low interest of the media in the European debate; the insignificant percentage of European news that media stand on their first pages or summaries; the small size or duration of most community news; the lack of a clear and accurate understanding by the public about who is behind the news, etc.

The media should grasp that keep the audience informed of events taking place in the European community -to which we belong-, is not just a matter of interest (journalistic or otherwise), but also a matter of right to information and journalistic ethics.

In the case of the member countries of the European Union, the social responsibility of the media extends beyond one's own nation, if we consider that decisions taken at European level influence the daily lives of our citizens. For this reason, it is an obligation -and not a devotion- of the media to keep us informed – well informed- about these community decisions.

Despite our pessimism about the obtained data in our research, we prefer to close this work positively, using one of the conclusions reached by the Polish team: "Fortunately, the Polish media are becoming increasingly an echo of the views expressed by many of the leaders of the European countries". Hopefully– and desirable- this media advance could spread…

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THE 8TH EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

The Open Method of Coordination,
a Cross-Border Mechanism for Social Practice

Tatiana-Camelia Dogaru[1]

Abstract: In the light of the debate on the future of the European Union a new topic has started. This topic is represented by Europeanization process and its profound impact upon the public policy of the member states. In order to understand it, since 1990s, the EU has included "new modes of governance" in its arsenal of policy-making instruments, among others the open method of coordination. The open method of coordination is one of the instruments that attract a particular attention of scholars, being described as "primus inter pares". The open method of coordination is a cross-border mechanism that aims to create a coherent social practice between the European Union member states. In this paper the author addresses the following query: in what extent uses Romania this mechanism for increasing coherence between its social practice and European ones? For answering have been drawn the subsequent objectives: (1) describing the instrument and the operational process of the open method of coordination, stressing the comparative perspective between community method and open method of coordination; (2) researching on historical development and main features of this tool; (3) exploring Romania's efforts for using the open method of coordination in social policies. From a methodological standpoint, the paper relies on comprehensive and systematic search of the literature and document analysis (among others Annual Reports, authorities' data, resume, obtained by using free accession to information) and strategic documents.

Keywords: mechanisms of Europeanization; open method of coordination; social practice; cross-border mechanism

1. Introduction

The concern of governments for governing from the assessment of public interest perspective, from realistic public need sizing (Matei, 2006, p. 27) has been a constant challenge for policy-making in the context of European integration and Europeanization. Under the requirements of Europeanization, the national institutional framework and policy-making process has been the subject of change (Matei, Dogaru, 2011, p. 3). The Europeanization, understood, on the one hand, as „a process of (1) construction, (2) diffusion and (3) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, „the ways of doing things", beliefs and values, which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy-making process and then incorporated in the logic of discourse, identities, political structures and public policies of national" (Radaelli, 2003) ensures the understanding of new policy instruments, including the Open Method of Coordination (OMC). On the other hand, if we accept the Europeanization as a globalization process expressed in the European continent, then this is present as a process with a strong impact on the public sector, public administration, as a process of convergence of public policies (Matei, 2007).

Therefore, the Open Method of Coordination is a mechanism that helps states in order to create some similar practices. The beginnings of OMC can be found before its „baptism", in 2000 period.

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According to some scholars (Dehousse, 2004a; Dehousse, 2004b, pp. 331-332) its development was supported by the experience of the European Employment Strategy, whose origins can be placed in the early 1990s, by the Cardiff and Cologne processes. Its embrace was not immediate, reason for which European Commission concerned about the role of this method, as well as by the Community method brings some clarifications and defines the Community method and the open method of coordination of public policies in the White Paper on Governance (2001). According to White Paper on Governance (2001), the open method of coordination is described as an "experimental form of government", an instrument of policy coordination. The OMC is a method designed to help Member States progress jointly in the reforms for achieving the objectives of Lisbon strategy, and now for achieving the goals of Europe 2020 strategy.

In the first years of practice, the European Commission has used this technique for developing certain forms of cooperation and coordination in areas close to the basic economic competences of European Union, in order to build some arguments for obtaining direct powers. Initially, the policy coordination was considered as a transition mechanism from national policies to a collective European system.

Today, it is considered that this approach enhanced by the benchmarking technique and systematic comparisons between policies is developed not as a transitional mechanism, but as a way with "full rights" to elaborate EU policy. The aim is to move towards common European goals and at the same time, leaving each state free to define its policies in order to optimal implementation. In the OMC, Member States draw up national plans of action that outlines priorities and actions planned with the support and under the supervision of the European Commission.

2. The Open Method of Coordination, a Cross-Border Mechanism

The realm of possible definitions for OMC is impressive. In this context, the literature emphasizes its specific features. According to a first source of research (Schäfer, 2006, p.15) the open method of coordination is "a special form of multilateral research". According to other scholars, the OMC was defined as: "the systematic attempt to establish a voluntary process of policy coordination" (Caporaso, 2006, pp. 471-480), "a mutual process of planning, examination, comparison and modification of policies of the Member States" (Vandenbroucke, 2002, p.31).

On the other hand, the papers devoted to this topic (Wallace, Pollack, Young, 2010, p.82) emphasize the presence of three factors that led to increased policy coordination as technique: (a) the transition to Economic Monetary Union with a single monetary policy, but only with the coordination of macroeconomic policies, (b) adoption of the Lisbon Strategy, which raised the open method of coordination to the rank of distinct techniques, (c) recognizing the variations between countries in terms of economic performance and policies. They also, list the following distinctive elements of this method: (a) The Commission is endowed with the quality of a creator of networks comprised experts, stakeholders, civil society, (b) involvement of the Council as a structure for developing activities including brainstorming and deliberation, (c) the involvement of independent experts to promote ideas and techniques, (d) involvement of specialized committees from European Parliament for depth analysis of policy issues, (e) low to moderate degree of centralization.

There is no consensus on the defining elements of this method, however the most of the works recorded following distinctive features (Scott, Trubek, 2002, pp. 1-18): (a) more limited role of Community law, there is a clear separation between the development and implementation of the law and the courts are no longer the main mechanism accountability, (b) a new approach to solving problems in this new format, the method works by repetition, cooperation between different levels of

government, between public and private, (c) participation and power sharing between the community, government (national) and civil society, the division of powers is much stronger, both levels of government and civil society are involved in this process. Furthermore, participation is required due to two reasons: legitimacy and effectiveness, (d) diversity and subsidiary are inseparable, open method recognizes diversity, (e) new ways to produce useful knowledge, is assumed that the OMC operates as a network, looking for useful information at each level, the specific instruments are consistent with the goal of learning (benchmarking, peer review, research and other multi-lateral mechanisms to spread trans-national policies), (f) public policy learning.

Summarizing the characteristics of OMC, Trubek, (Trubek, 2005, p. 15) have identified six general principles: (1) participation and the sharing of skills, (2) multi-level integration, (3) diversity and decentralization, (4) deliberation, (5) flexibility and (6) creation of knowledge.
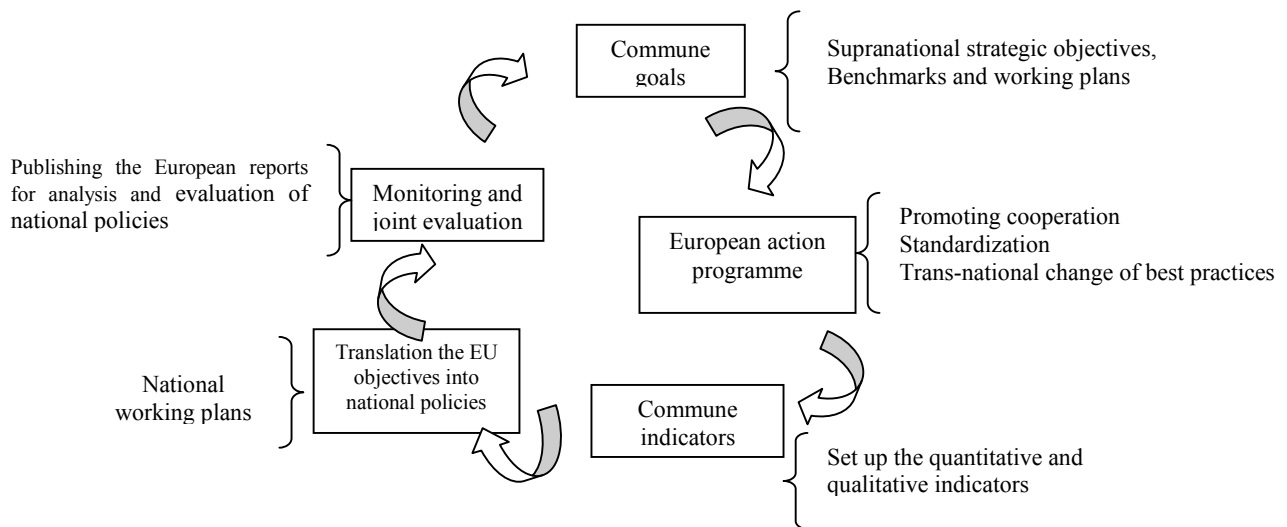

2.1. The Process of the Open Method of Coordination

OMC involves several steps. The OMC application starts with defining common objectives that guide the national policies and the development of indicators, on which the policies will be monitoring and evaluation. According to the rules set out in Essen, the conceptualization of these principles takes place at the supranational level and reinforces the coordination, as a principle (Sciarra, 2000, pp. 209-229). Having defined the objectives, it takes place the elaboration of the European Union guidelines and their transposition into national action plans. The main purpose of this action is to make the objectives of EU effective leaving to Member States the free to choose the most appropriate measures for implementation. The whole process ends with monitoring and evaluating the implementation of public policies.

The multi-level dialogue is positioned in the centre of the open method of coordination, the Council from Lisbon emphasizing the importance of including the regional dimensions in this dialogue (Régent, 2002). Once established the objectives and completed the Community action program is held to establish the quantitative and qualitative indicators and translating European guidelines into national and regional policies by setting specific targets. The last step, that European Council from Lisbon drawn on OMC materialization is the monitoring and periodic evaluation, organized as a mutual learning process (2000, Schäfer, 2004, p.11; Tholoniat, 2010, pp. 93-117).

A representation of the steps is shown in the figure below.

Figure 1. The Process of Open Method of Coordination

Source: Adapted from President Conclusions, European Council (Lisbon, 2002)

There is important variation between OMC's, however. Differences relate in particular to the legal basis and political mandate, the degree of commitment implied by the EU objectives, the status and composition of the committee representing the member states, and the role played by other stakeholders, especially the European Parliament, social partners and NGOs (Tholoniat, 2010, p. 96).

3. The Open Method of Coordination in Romania

The open method of coordination in its standard format described in the conclusions of the European Council hols in Lisbon or in its derivative forms finds its application in many areas of public policy, literature structuring these areas into three categories (Radaelli, 2003, pp.31-32):

➢ policy areas where there is a deliberate attempt to use the open method of coordination, as working method: (a) guidelines on macroeconomic policy, (b) European strategy on employment (labor), (c) social inclusion, (d) pensions;

➢ policy areas in which the intention was to use the OMC, but so far only limited tools methods were applied: (a) policies on innovation, research and development, (b) education, (c) the Information Society (d) environmental policy (e) health;

➢ policy areas where coordination method is "disguised": (a) direct taxation.

Romania adopted and used the tools and principles promoted by OMC even before becoming a member state of the European Union. The main areas in which it reflects are: (1) employment, (2) retirement, (3) social protection and social inclusion, (4) health/ long-term care, (5) environment (6) education and research.

Member States are the main actors in the process of social inclusion being understood as the main structure to achieve the objectives set out in this field.

3.1. The Using of OMC in Social Protection and Social Inclusion Field

In this work, the author attention focuses on the use of the open method of coordination in national social policies, specifically on public policies dedicated to social protection and social inclusion. The selection was influenced by the historical perspective of the open method of coordination, which showed that its origins are found in the European Employment Strategy and the fact that open method of coordination is directly involved in areas of public policy in the social sphere.

The proposal of OMC in social field occurred in the context of concerns for identifying strategies to achieve the objectives set out in the Social Paper of the European Union. Open Method of Coordination on social is a mix between OMC from social inclusion, pensions and health and long-term care fields.

Romania's participation in the OMC began in 2002, by allowing it as an observer to the Community Action Programme on Social Exclusion, and since 2005 has held its consolidation by signing the Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion, programmatic document for policy social.

For coordination the strategic process on social inclusion have been adopted the GD. no. 1217/2006 on the establishment of a national mechanism to promote social inclusion (Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly – MLFSPE, 2006, p.24). For its implementation, the line ministry has initiated a twinning project which has been implemented together with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in Finland, draft Twinning Light RO 04/01 SO 02/TL "Support for monitoring and implementing the Joint Inclusion Memorandum by the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family", the current Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly.

Although the effective implementation of the new cycle regarding the Open Method of Coordination on social protection and social inclusion began in 2007, preparing for this moment was started the year before, through development by Member States, including Romania the first National Strategic Report Social Protection and Social Inclusion for 2006 – 2008 period. In 2007 is established the National Commission for Social Inclusion and elaborated the National Plan of Development for 2007-2013 period, which inserts among its objectives the cutting down the socio-economic disparities between Romania and the other Member States of European Union, taking into account the promotion of social inclusion.

The results of the implementation of this document were reflected and summarized in the monitoring report on the progress made by Romania in the field of social inclusion, made in early 2008.

In 2008-2010 period was elaborated the second National Strategic Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, the objectives of which include: continuing efforts to develop an inclusive society based on social inclusion providing integrated services through evaluating the real needs of the individual, through developing the tertiary sector and ensuring equal opportunities for all, with special emphasis on vulnerable people.

Also, Romania's participation in the open method of coordination was achieved through involvement in two projects, one project leader, in the second as partner, funded under the EU PROGRESS, programme, namely: (1) "SYNTHESIS - integrated social services for groups most vulnerable" [Ro - leader], (2) "Life after institutionalization. Equal opportunities and social inclusion of young people: identification and promotion of best practices"[Ro - partner] (MLFSPE, 2008, pp. 31-32).

These actions were complemented by measures such as: (1) 2008 - launching Phare 2006/018-147.04.02.03.02 "Technical assistance for national awareness campaign to promote social inclusion", (2) structural funds - POS - Development of Administrative Capacity: good governance in social

inclusion and increased law enforcement in social services at the local level in the context of decentralization.

4. Short Conclusions

The special advantages of the open method of coordination are reflected in flexibility, dynamism and its ability to shape public policy.

According to the community method, Member States promote their interests through European Union Council and are involved in the implementation of European policies with the European Commission, assisted by committees of civil servants from the Member States.

In the OMC framework, the Member States draw up national plans of action that outlines priorities and actions planned with the support and under the supervision of the European Commission. Through open method of coordination, the Member States coordinate their policies to combat poverty and social exclusion on the basis of a political exchange (interests, needs) and joint learning

Romania has made its participation in the OMC since 2005, with the signing of the Joint Inclusion Memorandum. Romania has made legislative and institutional progress, developed strategies, action plans and programs of national interest.

Every two years, Romania has to prepare a memorandum on social inclusion, which will be the development of a common EU Memorandum.

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THE 8TH EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
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REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

Forests in the Light of Sustainable Development

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Abstract: The concept of sustainable development assigns all the social and economic development methods and forms, whose fundament is firstly represented by the insurance of a balance between these social-economic systems and the elements of the natural capital. The most known definition of sustainable development is surely the one of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in the "Our common future" report, also known as the Brundtland Report: "sustainable development is the development that aims at satisfying the present need without compromising future generations' possibility to satisfy their own needs". Sustainable development also aims at and tries to establish a theoretical frame in order to make decisions in all situations that include a human/environment report, whether it is about the environment, the economic or the social environment. Though sustainable development has initially been regarded as a solution to the ecological crisis determined by the huge industrial exploitation of resources and the continuous soil degradation of the environment and it has sought to preserve the quality of the environment, nowadays the concept has been extended to the living quality in its intricacy, involving the economic and social issue. Nowadays, the concern of sustainable development also represents a concern for right and country equality, not only for generations. Within the process, several international conventions have been adopted, which establish precise country requirements and strict implementation terms regarding climate changing, biodiversity preservation, protection of the forest fund and of the wet areas, access to environment quality information and others, that outline an international judicial space for the implementation of the sustainable development concepts.

Keywords: sustainable development; equity; forests

Introduction

It is thus admitted that planet Earth has a limited capacity of satisfying the growing natural resources growth from the socio-economic system and absorbing the destructive effects of their usage. Climatic changes, erosion and desertification phenomena, soil, water and air pollution, the forest systems areas reduction, the extinction or the existence endangerment of a large number of plant species and terrestrial or water animal species, the accelerated exhaustion of nonrenewable resources started having negative effects, measurable in terms of socio-economic development and human living standard quality in large areas of the planet.

The forest is a very important factor of the sustainable development of the society through its environmental protection functions that it performs and through its socio-economic functions.

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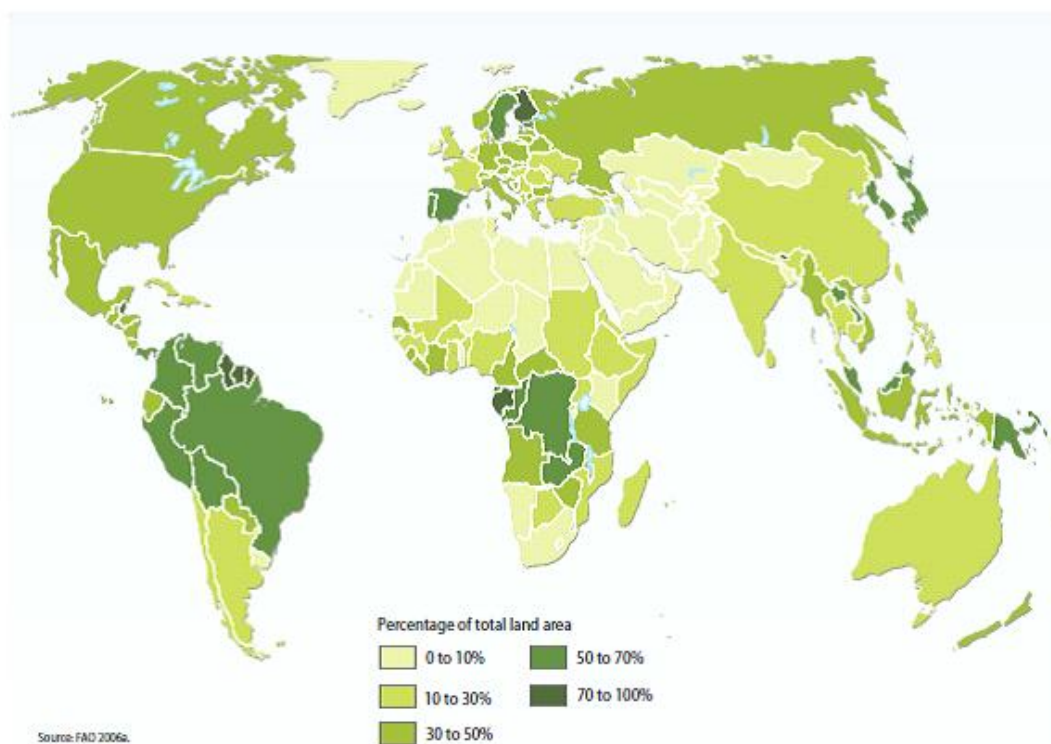
Source: FAO

Forest is defined as a land surface covered by forest vegetation and larger than 0.25 ha. Like in the case of green spaces, these areas are highly important for the maintenance of the optimal living quality. The forest, the Earth's green gold, has always been an unlimited life source, both for humans and animals. The wood in forests has been used for a long time. Next to stone and clay, wood has given humans the possibility to develop their first hunting tools, the first houses and tools. Wood also has had an important role in preparing the food since the discovery of fire.

The Function of Forests in Nature and Society

Forests that still represent important areas of the planet are important ecosystems both for humans and strictly in ecological terms. Forest has esthetical, recreational and economic values for mankind. Wood, as well as other forest products has both an economic local and global significance. It is estimated that a third of the world population still depends on wood as a significant energy source.

One of the main advantages of the forest is represented by the reduction of the soil erosion risk, landslides, floods and avalanches. Forest also has an important role in the regime of local rainfalls, it prevents desertification, it can positively influence the climate and it is an important oxygen source, as well as a carbon dioxide retainer.

In economic and ecological terms, forest has met and meets an important series of important, vital functions.

Table 1. Forest area in Europe, 1990–2010

Region	Area (1 000 ha)			Annual change (1 000 ha)		Annual change rate (%)	
	1990	2000	2010	1990–2000	2000–2010	1990–2000	2000–2010
Russian Federation	808 950	809 269	809 090	32	-18	n.s.	n.s.
Europe excluding Russian Federation	180 521	188 971	195 911	845	694	0.46	0.36
Total Europe	989 471	998 239	1 005 001	877	676	0.09	0.07
World	4 168 399	4 085 063	4 032 905	-8 334	-5 216	-0.20	-0.13

Source: FAO

In the hilly area, forest favors the process of water retaining in the slopping lands, preventing the surface spills and water floods as a result of torrential rainfall and melting snow, thus avoiding the flooding and soil erosion phenomena.

In the photosynthetic process forests also have an important place in renewing both the local and global oxygen reserves. One hectare of forest annually produces almost 30 tons of oxygen, of which 13 tons are used in the process of tree breathing. Trees and shrubs also help at the various sound levels mitigation, they have a positive influence on the wind regime, air humidity and temperature, as well as air vibrations. To this regard, literature assigns that windbreaks can reduce the noise up to 10 decibels.

The assembly of favorable living conditions created in forests determines the reduction of pulse frequency with 4-8 pulsations/minute, tending to optimize the blood pressure and favor the good mood. For people that suffer from breathing affections, softwood forests or beech and softwood mixture forests in the mountain areas are benefic. In plain areas, with reduced forest areas, windbreaks have an important influence on the environment. Thus, they reduce the speed of the wind from 5 up to 10 times their size, causing the uniform snow retention and distribution on the arable areas that protect winter crops against frosts, increasing the water reserves, protecting the communication means, human communities and animal farms against snowmaking.

Forests contain the largest plant and animal diversity on the Earth. Thus, they represent vegetal or animal medication source. Medicinal substances that have already been especially discovered in the Equatorial forests represent a guarantee for the future greater therapeutically successes.

On the whole, forest contribution to the biosphere balance maintenance has a great significance as a massive windbreak. Due to this fact, national or global forest exploitation must be rational, not only from the wood point of view, but also from the methods used for the most possible avoidance of reducing the forest surfaces. Due to exaggerate deforestation and forest destruction through global unreasonable exploitation and excessive grazing, the desertification process has increased, especially on the African continent, where forest damages cannot be ecologically or economically justified.

Within the destructive process against the forest surfaces, air pollution has an important role, which leads to the drying trees phenomenon. For example, 10 million forest hectares in Europe have witnessed the three drying process for spruce, fir, oak and sessile. Other factors that have contributed

to the process have been the high altitude pollution and the one produced by chemical and oil industries, in the cement factories, metallurgical and mining enterprises.

Table 2. Area of planted forests in Europe, 1990–2010

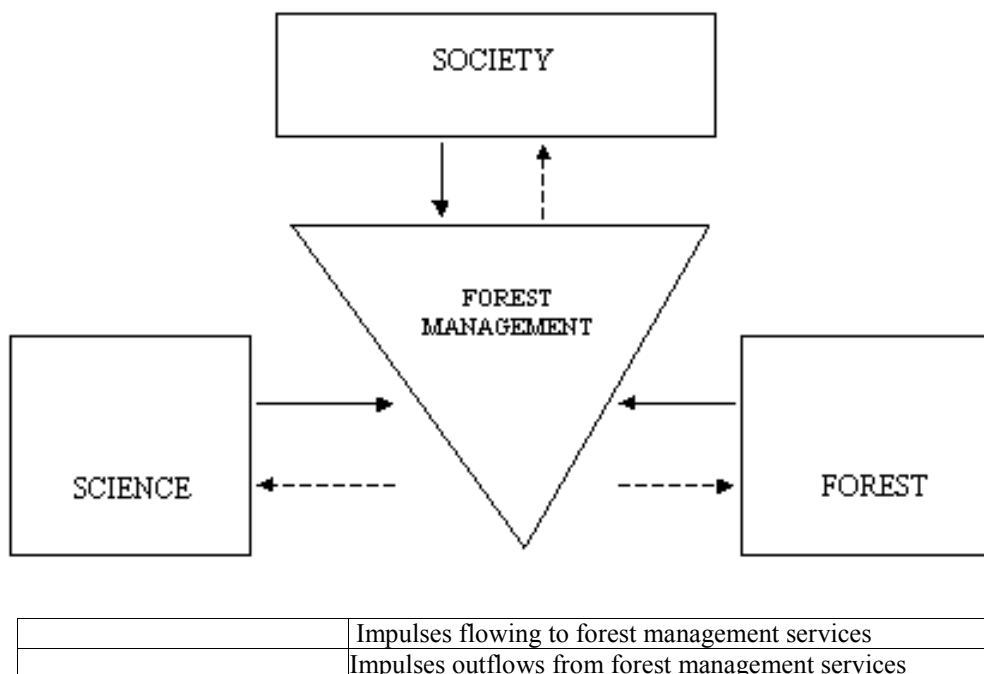| Region	Area (1 000 ha)			Annual change (1 000 ha)		Annual change rate (%)	
	1990	2000	2010	1990–2000	2000–2010	1990–2000	2000–2010
Russian Federation	12 651	15 360	16 991	271	163	1.96	1.01
Europe excluding Russian Federation	46 395	49 951	52 327	356	238	0.74	0.47
Total Europe	59 046	65 312	69 318	627	401	1.01	0.60
World	178 307	214 839	264 084	3 653	4 925	1.88	2.09

Source: FAO

As a whole, forest significance and maintaining the ecological balance and the destructive actions they are subject of, emphasize the need of cooperation on various plans of all specialists that operate in different productive and research fields of agriculture and forestry, in order to prevent, reconstructions and maintenance of ecological balance, vital for life on Earth.

Forest management is considered as both independent scientific branch and practical field, containing many aspects of forestry, which formulates synthetic conclusions indicating the main directions of management.

Forest management is engaged in formation of relation between nature and the man on the basis of knowledge of forest state, demand society for forest functions as well as scientific achievements and experience in solving the problems of running and organic structure of forestry.

The system of information flow of forest management services can be shown as a model:

	Impulses flowing to forest management services
	Impulses outflows from forest management services

Source: http://www2.nr.no/foremms/forestmanag.html

Forest Resources in the European Union

The forest surface in one country consists of the total area excepting the river and lake areas. Forests are defined by the FAO as surfaces covered by trees that cover more than 10% of the total area, which has to be larger than 0.5 ha, including trees that can reach 5 meters high at maturity.

Within the European Union, barely two fifths of the surface have been classified as forested areas (in other words, as forests or forested lands), a similar percentage to the one used in agricultural scopes. The total area of the forested surfaces in the EU reached 177,8 mil ha in 2010.

Table 3. Forest surfaces in UE, EFTA and candidate countries

	Surface	Forests and other forested areas	
	2008	2000	2010
	1000 ha		
EU-27	430 340	174 235	177 757
EA-17	265 779	111 304	112 628
Belgium	3 028	694	706
Bulgaria	11 100	3 480	3 927
Czech Republic	7 725	2 637	2 657
Denmark	4 310	622	591
Germany	35 711	11 076	11 076
Estonia	4 343	2 337	2 350
Ireland	6 839	650	789
Greece	13 082	6 525	6 539
Spain	50 599	27 452	27 747
France	63 283	17 165	17 572
Italy	29 511	10 439	10 916
Cyprus	925	387	387
Latvia	6 220	3 097	3 467
Lithuania	6 288	2 103	2 240
Luxembourg	259	88	88
Hungary	9 303	1 866	2 029
Malta	32	0	0
Netherland	3 376	360	365
Austria	8 244	3 955	4 006
Poland	31 269	9 059	9 337
Portugal	9 212	3 667	3 611
Romania	22 989	6 400	6 515
Slovenia	2 014	1 283	1 274
Slovakia	4 904	1 921	1 933
Finland	30 390	23 305	23 269
Sweden	41 034	30 653	31 247
United Kingdom	24 315	2 813	2 901
Iceland	10 025	142	116
Liechtenstein	16	7	8
Norway	30 547	12 000	12 768
Switzerland	4 000	1 263	1 311
Montenegro	1 382	744	744
Croatia	5 659	2 300	2 474
Macedonia	2 491	1 101	1 141
Turkey	76 960	20 780	21 702

Source: Eurostat, State of Europe's Forest 2011

Member states with the highest forested areas percentage were Finland and Sweden, where nearly three quarters of the country surface was covered by forests. Member states with the lowest forested areas percentage were Malta, the Netherlands, Ireland and the United Kingdom. Sweden only covers 17.6% of the whole surface of forests in Europe in 2010, and the five mostly forested area in the EU (Sweden, Spain, Finland, France and Germany) covered more than three fifths (nearly 62.4%) from the total forested areas in the EU. Between 2000 and 2010, forested areas in the member states of the EU had risen, due to the natural extension and afforestation by 3.5 mil. Ha, namely a 2% growth. Only four member states reported a reduction of the forested areas, with Denmark as leader with a 5% reduction followed by Portugal, Slovenia and Finland. In relative terms, the most important expansion of the forested areas were reported in Ireland (21.4%), while Belgium and Latvia have reported positive growths of 10%. In absolute terms, four member states have registered a growth of more than 400.000 ha, namely France, Bulgaria, Italy and Sweden, with Sweden reports of the highest forested surface (594 000 ha).

Nearly 40% of the forest surface in the European Union is a public property. Based on the available data of 24 member states of the EU (incomplete data for Greece, Portugal and Sweden), the public property forest surfaces have grown up to 8.6%. In the extended Europe, forests that are public properties are managed by more than 12 mil private forest owners, who are in most cases small owners outside the industrial field which manage their forests based on the sustainability principle.

The publically owned forest areas have decreased between 2000 and 2010 in ten member states, especially Romania, Slovenia and Lithuania and in a lower percentage in Austria, Finland, Latvia, Estonia and the United Kingdom. Some of these reductions in the new member states of the EU since 2004 can be the result of the restitution of the lands to the former owners, while other countries have sold the surfaces that made the object of public property.

Table 4. Forest property forms in the EU, EFTA and candidate states

	Public Property		Private or other form	
	2000	2010	2000	2010
	1000 ha			
Belgium	290	301	377	377
Bulgaria	3 041	3 408	334	519
Czech Republic	2 023	2 041	614	616
Denmark	138	139	348	448
Germany	5 846	5 708	5 230	5 368
Estonia	899	858	1 344	1 345
Ireland	399	400	236	337
Greece (1)	2 790	2 907	811	845
Spain	4 988	5 336	12 000	12 838
France	3 984	4 113	11 369	11 841
Italy	2 811	3 073	5 558	6 076
Cyprus	118	119	54	54
Latvia	1 749	1 655	1 493	1 696
Lithuania	1 562	1 366	458	784
Luxembourg	41	41	46	46
Hungary	1 155	1 178	753	861
Malta	0	0	0	0
Netherlands	184	184	176	181
Austria	928	858	2 332	2 482
Poland	7 535	7 661	1 524	1 658
Portugal (1)	54	54	3 366	3 382
Romania (2)	6 010	4 398	356	2 097
Slovenia	365	291	868	962
Slovakia	1 006	980	915	958
Finland	7 213	6 699	15 245	15 389

Sweden (3)	7 522	7 664	20 990	20 941
United Kingdom	1 011	959	1 782	1 922
Iceland	7	8	12	22
Liechtenstein	6	6	1	1
Norway	1 299	1 450	8 002	8 800
Switzerland (3)	885	889	-	-
Montenegro	337	337	130	130
Croatia	1 398	1 450	487	524
Macedonia (1)	864	881	94	94
Turkey (1)	10 131	10 730	15	10

- – 2005 instead of 2010, changes from 2000 to 2005
- – excluding other property forms
- 2005 instead of 2000,changes from 2005 to 2010

Source: SoEF 2011

Table 5. Protected forest surfaces in the EU (1000 ha)

	Protected areas
EU (1)	20 356
EA (1)	14 283
Belgium	209
Bulgaria	313
Czech Republic	740
Denmark	40
Germany	2 754
Estonia	213
Ireland	58
Greece	164
Spain	2 499
France	313
Italy	3 265
Cyprus	95
Latvia	610
Lithuania	433
Luxemburg	0
Hungary	424

Malta	0
Netherlands	83
Austria	659
Poland	187
Portugal	700
Romania	1 746
Slovenia	241
Slovakia	1 104
Finland	1 925
Sweden	1 435
United Kingdom	145
Iceland	0
Liechtenstein	4
Norway	167
Switzerland	90
Montenegro	13
Croatia	54
Macedonia	0
Turkey	269

- Data available for member states

Source: FAO (2010), Eurostat

20.4 mil forest ha (the equivalent of 13% of the total forested surface) were protected in 2010 in the EU, for example in national parks, where trees and their environments are usually protected. Member states with the highest percentage of protected areas were Italy, Germany and Spain; on the other side, one can see that states like Macedonia, Iceland, Malta and Luxembourg do not have protected forest surfaces.

Conclusions

Sustainable development can be seen as an accommodation of the society and economy with the great issues mankind faces nowadays: climate changes, water crisis, drought, desertification, resources depletion, wastes, biodiversity loss, population growth, poverty, migration etc. in order to overcome, counteract and remove their effects and to ensure economic development, social progress and human development the development and implementation of certain actions are required in this direction.

In the case of the European Union and Romania, environmental protection issues are keenly approached, especially as a result of intense local pollution of the industry, deforestation as well as other factors that have led to the damage of the ecosystems and the worsening of living standards.

If we accept that sustainable development means "satisfying the present needs without undermining the next generations' possibility to satisfy their needs", then its implementation also depends on and it is influenced by almost any political, social economic and/or administrative decision we nowadays make.

Being aware of the problems the community faces, including both the decision maker and citizens, accelerates the process of finding optimal solutions needed in order to reach the objectives of sustainable development. Any action strategy making process must make the object of social consulting, in order to ensure the fact that once adopted, the strategies will be implemented. This objective can be reached by educating and making citizens aware, by consulting and attracting them in the implementation process.

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