

altera 24

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In order to understand the dynamic of the European integration we should focus on the relationship between the national and international levels as well as on the one between the national and regional ones. It is only by analysing the importance of states, nations and regions extant in present day Europe that we can deal with issues like European identity or the character of the European communities now taking shape. The European Community the present European Union, has stood out as a paramount regional organism since the rythm, the proportion and the environment of European integration changed after its member states decided in 1985 to demolish the borders within the European economic space and after the end of the cold war, since when the ex-communist states has looked upon it as the key element of their transition to market economy and a democratic regime. European integration succeeded in eliminating the obnoxious character of nationalism in the relationships between Western Europe states; it enabled them to confine their rivalries within acceptable limits. But as long as the public environment remains mainly national, this impedes the development of a real politics within EU. The development of the political community is also impeded by the assertion of national identity. The latter has not been replaced by regional identities, even though it may be weakened in some places. In shaping European identity, Europe should insist on social and citizenship rights which have become essential components of the European identity in the post-war period. Adding the “mezo”-level of administration is an attempt at bringing governance closer to citizens. “The Europe of Regions” is an enticing tool for filling the gap between Europe’s political structures and the administrative ones. The political and constitutional standing of the regions within Europe depends on the position they hold within the states they belong to. The correlation between regions, nations and states is crucial in the future defining of the European governing structures.

Jean Sibille

The Recognition of the Cultural Value of the
Regional Languages in France

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The recognition of the cultural value of languages, a vast topic, is dealt with in this study sociologically, psychologically, politically and, partly legally. The author contends that languages are important culturally as they are a vehicle for literary works, past and present; they are important socially as they bring diversity into society which in its turn brings about a great openness toward the world; they are a key element of historical memory and a democratic society cannot be built on erasing memory, this is a trait of totalitarian regimes. Nevertheless, the French state and society are far from taking into account such a reasoning: what is no longer allowed to be said about Jews, African origin people or Arabs is allowed to be said about Corsicans, for instance. From a legal point of view, regional languages in France lack recognition by the state: there is not a single official text to give them the proper statute, nor one to name and list them. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages has not been adopted by France as it has been seen as non-constitutional. A regional language policy should strive to encourage the use of those languages, to provide them the means for survival, the material support, and especially to include their teaching in the education system.

Constantin Iordachi

Citizenship and National Identity in Romania:

A Historical Overview

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This article is designed as a first historical overview of Romanian citizenship legislation from 1866 up to the present, a subject that has received so far a limited scholarly attention. It focuses on the historical roots of the institution of citizenship in Romania, on the main features of Romanian citizenship legislation, and on the relationship between citizenship and issues of state formation, construction of national identity, and the structuring of the private and public spheres. Special attention is devoted to social, ethnic, religious and gender groups excluded from Romanian citizenship, to their strategies of emancipation and their relation with the dominant national ideology. The evolution of citizenship in Romania has exhibited a close similarity with patterns of national developments in the third „time zone of citizenship” (according to Ernst Gellner’s classification), that of east-central Europe. First, Romanian national ideology promoted a “thick” and “primordial” definition of citizenship, since it attached to citizenship status substantive rights and duties and defined membership in the national “imagined community” on the basis of the myth of common origin and historical destiny. Second, the concept of citizenship in Romania evolved as a “competition” be-

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tween two contrasting understandings of citizenship: a liberal one, which was “state-centred, secular and assimilationist” and an opposing Romanticist one which was “Volk-centred, and dissimilationist”, a distinction that is usually presented as a French/German contrasting understanding of citizenship. However, citizenship legislation in Romania was not shaped exclusively by these ideological commitments, but exhibited specific characteristics, modelled by Romania’s geo-political position, state policies and interests, as well as features of socio-political development.

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<i>On the Premises of the Legal Proposal regarding the Framework-Law on Regions and the Special Status for the Szekler Land.</i>	
<i>In drawing up the three bills, the initiator took into account that the autonomy of the Hungarians in Transylvania can be achieved on the basis of Western Europe stable models; such an autonomy implies a regionalist reform of the Romanian state and this, in its turn, makes necessary a constitutional reform. Thus, the bills should not be considered as simple legal initiatives, but also as a medium term political agenda.</i>	
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<i>Today Romania is one of the most centralised states in Europe so — even though it is an issue authorities, political parties and society alike are afraid or simply reluctant to deal with — regionalisation is a pressing matter as it has an economical, social, administrative and political stake. Against this background, the bills on regionalisation is built up according to “political correctness” principles and, while drawing from European models, it strives to voice Szeklers’ specific claims.</i>	

TRANSYLVANIAN CONVERGENCIES

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The failure of the Revolution in 1848 was followed by the emergence and development of a civic nationalism on the part of the Romanians, a kind of nationalism that was not directed against the “other”, but a way of integrating the coexisting nations in Transylvania. The Romanians, as members of nation excluded from the political and administrative affairs of the time, were the best to understand that the autonomous principality of Transylvania could not make progress without a system of participation of all nations in the governing of the province. This short-lived political exercise along with the long constitutional autonomy traditions of the principality determined Romanians to stick to the idea of autonomy and to claim it both after Transylvania’s union with Hungary and later, when Transylvania’s union with Romania was discussed and when they realized they were about to know “the slavehood of Bucharest centralism”. Nevertheless, Transylvania was never to enjoy autonomy again, the Transylvanian elites’ attempts before and after 1918 to revert to the constitutional autonomy traditions of the principality turning out to be mere missed acts.

FACES OF EUROPE

Cristina Gheorghe

Valle d’Aosta / Vallée d’Aoste, a Special Status Region

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The smallest and the least populated region in Italy, Vallée d’Aoste has enjoyed an autonomous status since 1948. Vallée d’Aoste is not the only region to enjoy such a status in Italy, Trentino-Alto-Adige, South Tyrol and Friuli-Venezia-Giulia are other special status regions of the Italian state. The Special Statute of Vallée d’Aoste includes the exercise of legislative power both in adjusting the legal provisions of the centre to the specific characteristics of the region and in issuing laws of its own. The region’s decision-making bodies are a replica of the bodies at the national level: a council, a government and a president. As the main criterion in establishing the region was the linguistic one, the preservation and promotion of Franco-Provencale, French and German is provided for in the Special Statute and implemented both in education and administration.

DIALOGUE

The Central-European Forum on Regionalisation and Integration

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The PRO EUROPE League, the Provincia Association, the Transylvania-Banat League and the Free European Alliance of the European Parliament organised the The Central-European Forum for Regionalisation and Integration at Cluj between 18-20 September 2003. Among the participants were experts and politicians from this country and from Western and East and Central European states, representatives of non-governmental organisations, journalists, political scientists.

The first thing noted by the participants was the gradual shift from an emotional discourse on regionalisation and regionalism to an open proper debate and analysis by the Romanian elites. As the present administrative structure dates from 1968, being as such another “heritage” of Ceaușescu’s regime, it badly needs to be reformed and this reform should be coupled with and incented by Romania’s accession to the EU.

What exactly a region is remains a matter for contention, but even lacking an official definition, there can be identified regions within a state, regions comprising several states and regions made up of parts of different state. The EU has shown a special interest in regions, an interest materialised in the financial support given to already existing regions in order to bring them closer economically. Experience proves that the more successful regionalisation is, the easier and more substantial the access to EU funding. EU has also shown political support for establishing regions, without making this a compulsory process, so it is within each state where the political struggle for the recognition of regions must take place. EU is going through two processes: enlargement and integration, its member states and candidate countries through regionalisation and regionalism, but the ultimate goal of these intertwined processes is development. A properly made regionalisation should not confine itself to receiving EU structural funds, but it should aim at generating welfare itself. On the other hand, EU itself is undergoing a process of rebalancing: a new hard core is emerging, consisting of federal states (even Italy is envisaging a constitutional federalisation), the West-East polarisation is giving way to a centre-periphery structuring.

As the experience of the Basque Country shows, autonomy should be coupled with the ability to make economic decisions, otherwise it fails; responsibilities coupled with possibilities; political autonomy needs decentralisation, decision-making to be brought closer to the citizens, political freedom and financial independence.

Unlike other regions in EU, that are usually ethnically based, Transylvania, having two major ethnic actors (Hungarians and Romanians), is about to create a transethnic regional identity.

Nation states find it easier to share their sovereignty with other nation states than with regions within them.

While regionalism in Romania is an issue the elites, including the political ones, have shown to be interested in, it is much too abstract for ordinary people; still, instead of spreading the concept of regionalisation, the political elites simply ignore it for fear they should lose popularity.

Regionalism in Romania could benefit from recovering its inter-war theoretical traditions both Romanian and Hungarian and connecting these two lines; it would also benefit from establishing a working group focusing on this topic.

ALTERA PARS

Michael Guest

Speech Delivered on Being Bestowed the Doctor Honoris Causa

Title by Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj

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Ambassador Michael Guest's speech delivered at Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj aims at explaining how America's historical experience has framed the way America views its relations with other countries, including Romania. Citizens' rights, the primacy of individual freedoms, equality under the law, the rule of law are the groundwork of American democracy Democracy in any country is a "work in progress." America continues to wrestle with, debate, and refine the rights laid out by its founding fathers to achieve what the Constitution calls "a more perfect union." The ambassador's belief is that there is an inherent link between America's security and national interests, on the one hand, and a broadening sphere in which its democratic values are shared, on the other. The lessons of history in the city of Cluj have developed over many hundreds of years; America's lessons are far younger, but no less deeply rooted, but both of them should be used by young people in Romania to create the future they want and deserve.

CASE STUDY

Emil Moise

The State-Church Relationship Regarding Religious Education
in Public Schools in Romania

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The study sets out by analysing the legal framework on religious education in Romania and proves that the status of this object is compulsory coming thus against all constitutional provisions regarding freedom of consciuosness and the free development of human personality The muddled character of laws allows for many and various legal abuses in schools, where religious education turns out to vent hatred and intolerance towards other religions than the one taken up by the majority: Orthodox Christianity. Instead of fostering understanding and instead of striving to achieve spiritual perfection of human beings, religious education becomes a tool for leveling diversity of opinions, diversity that is the very groundwork of any democratic society.

PRO EUROPE League

The PRO EUROPE League (Liga PRO EUROPA) is one of the most well-known civic NGOs in Romania, founded in the Transylvanian town of Tîrgu-Mureş (Marosvásárhely — Neumarkt), on 30 December 1989, immediately after the fall of the Ceauşescu's dictatorial regime.

The PEL has become respected due to its involvement in promoting human rights, pluralism and multicultural values. From the very beginning of the transition, the PEL has played a significant role in the political reality of Romania, joining different civic movements and alliances committed to mobilize public opinion against the restauration of the former communist structures. In the specific area of the multicultural society of Transylvania, the PEL has played an important role in monitoring discriminatory policies against minorities and in promoting tolerance between Romanians and Hungarians, a key issue for peace and democratic progress in Central Europe.

For more than eight years, the PEL has organized an impressive number of workshops, seminars, round-table debates, summer camps, conflict resolution missions and meetings for teachers, local authorities, judges, prosecutors, students, political and civic leaders, has published an independent weekly and a series of booklets and brochures.

altera is meant to promote the PEL's values among academics, policy makers and the large public in Romania. It is one of the few Romanian publication focusing on the issue of ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity in the Transylvanian area, as well as European integration.

- *Acest număr a fost realizat cu sprijinul Fundațiilor Heinrich Böll (Germania) și Charles Stewart Mott (SUA), cărora editorii le adresează mulțumiri.*
- *Opțiunile exprimate în articolele publicate aparțin autorilor.*
 - *Articolele nepublicate nu se restituie.*
 - *Drepturile de publicare sînt rezervate.*

Responsabil de număr: Elek Szokoly

Grafica: Mana Bucur

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