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## Content

The Druze in the United States Jihan FARHOUD	5
Understanding EU-Belarus Relations Paul POPA	9
Return to “Europe” Doru Cristian TODORESCU	21
Book Review The meanings of nudity in Medieval Art. Edited by Sherry C. M. Lindquist (Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012), 356 pp.+ill Florin- Aron PĂDUREAN	27

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# The Druze in the United States

Jihan FARHOUD\*

**Abstract:** *The first immigrants arrived in the United States with the aim of becoming rich. In 1907, a group of Druze immigrants to the United States set up the first brotherhood organization under the name "Al-Bachorat al-Durzia". They intended to preserve their religion, culture and Druze identity. In 1947, the younger generation of the Druze immigrants took over the leadership and expanded the operations of the organization. Second- and third-generation Druze Americans are often assimilated into American youth culture.*

**Key Words:** Druze immigration, the United States, American Druze Foundation

**A**T THE END OF the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Druze from Syria and Lebanon began migrating to the United States, and today this community has become the most important one among all the Druze communities in the diaspora. "The journey of the Druze in America is one filled with pride, hard work, and boundless dreams". ([American Druze Foundation, 2017](#))

The first immigrants arrived in the United States with the aim of becoming rich and returning to their native country under better conditions, but not all of them returned. The first Druze immigrants reached the shores of America at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and because of their rising numbers, the need arose for ties of friendship and support with each other. At the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the flow of Druze immigrants to America increased.

"Many of the immigrants came and settled across the United States with a large concentration in Michigan; Seattle, Washington; and the North East. They were enduring spirits, hardworking individuals, loyal countrymen, and proud patriots". ([American Druze Foundation, 2017](#))

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The Druze who had migrated to America and were greatly in need of preserving their religion, culture and identity, encountered many difficulties at the beginning of their lives far from their homeland. Therefore, it was a growing necessity for them to keep united and organized (Salah, 1989).

The history of the Druze in American can be divided into three periods:

### **The first period: Establishment of the lives of the immigrants - from the beginning of the Druze migration until 1946**

In 1907, a group of Druze immigrants to the United States set up the first brotherhood organization under the name "Al-Bachorat al-Durzia". On February 1, 1908, the first meeting of the organization was held in the city of Seattle. The organization served as a means for unity and a tool for collective organized planning. Its motto was "Truth in speech and brotherhood in action" (Our Heritage, 1982). Through this organization the Druze immigrants intended to preserve their religion, culture and Druze identity as well as to support the livelihood of their families in Lebanon and assist the Druze charity institutions in the motherland. The organization succeeded in setting up a united group of Druze families in the United States and drawing close and strengthening the relations between them. It supplied services to the members of the Druze community and contributed to the preservation of the principles of the Druze faith among the Druze immigrants.

The aims of the organization were determined at the 1908 meeting:

1. Offering assistance to every member who was in need of health services.
2. Setting up social meetings among the members of the organization.
3. Setting up libraries and furnishing them.
4. Promoting social and personal relations among the members of the organization.
5. Paying the expenses of illness for every member.

At the meeting held on October 15, 1946, it was decided to conduct annual meetings. At the 1946 meeting, the American Druze Society (ADS) was founded, through which the ties of friendship, brotherhood and close association among the Druze of the United States were reinforced. Throughout the years the members of the organization endeavoured to strengthen the relations between the Druze in all parts of the United States by organizing festivals in which the Druze families, especially the younger generation, could participant with the aim of maintaining close ties amongst them.

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### **The second period: From 1947-1970, the 24<sup>th</sup> annual meeting**

In 1947, the younger generation of the Druze immigrants, those born in the United States, took over the leadership and expanded the operations of the organization. From then onwards, the aim of the organization was not only to preserve the Druze religion, culture and identity, but also to provide a basis for the development and expansion at the national level. The American Druze Society (ADS) was then founded, and the new society had aims identical with the former one with a stress on the involvement of young Druze in the community.

As a result of the establishment of the new organization, a new tradition developed among the Druze immigrants of annual meetings during which internal matters were discussed, positions were consolidated for conduct towards factors outside the community with the aim of allowing young boys and girls of marriageable age to get to know one another. The organization was not formal, and adopted the name "American Druze Society". This society was strengthened, and internal laws were legislated in 1962 to arrange the various spheres of life within the community. In the course of time these laws were formed into a society under the name "American Druze Society".

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### **The third period: From the 25<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in 1971 until today**

At the 25<sup>th</sup> annual meeting, the silver jubilee of 1971, the "National ADS" was founded with the aim to unify all the branches of the society in the various cities of the United States under a single leadership (O.H. 1982).

In 1972, a group of scholars began to translate the principles of the Druze faith into English in order to bring the younger generation in the community which did not know Arabic closer to their religion. The society appointed Dr. Sami Makarem, a Lebanese of a religious family who had studied in the United States and was a professor at the American University in Beirut, to compose a book in English on the Druze faith. This book, published in 1974, was written with the permission of the Druze spiritual leader in Lebanon (Makarem 1974). Until today, this book is used as a means to preserve Druze identity among the immigrants in the United States.

The challenges that facing the Druze growing up in the United States, "religion isn't part of daily life. Second- and third-generation Druze Americans

are often assimilated into American youth culture, and many move further from the faith when they enter high school and college".(Liana Aghajanian 2015)

In 1989, a visionary and dedicated group of American Druze pioneers incorporated the American Druze Foundation. They saw what was not; they dreamt of what could be; and, their actions bore the fruit of their labour, forging a strong presence for the American Druze in the United States of America.

Today, the American Druze Foundation (ADF) is dedicated to the study, preservation, and enhancement of the Druze cultural heritage and the advancement of the understanding of the Druze in the American community. "The foundation's realized dream of placing the Druze in the best halls of American academia through partnership with established universities is just the beginning".(American Druze Foundation, 2017)

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## Conclusion

The initial organization of the first Druze immigrants to the United States led to the founding of the American Druze Society (ADS). The aims of this organization fulfilled the aims to which these first immigrants aspired to realize. The first aim was to preserve Druze identity in the West in widest sense, and to transmit traditional Druze pride from generation to generation, to maintain ties of friendship, and to preserve the unique Druze culture in order to avoid assimilation within Western society.

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# Understanding EU-Belarus Relations

Paul POPA\*

**Abstract:** A redefinition of the Eastern Partnership beyond 2013 was urgently needed in order to make the EU a more competitive player vis-à-vis Russia and China in the region. Eastern partners which choose deeper economic integration with the EU must therefore be supported by enhanced cooperation, which would require further differentiation in approaches towards neighbours. It should also be supported by certain horizontal policies, strengthening the EU's multilateral cooperation and the fledgling European Union diplomacy in this region, assisted by better targeting policies at EaP societies.

**Key words:** partnership, energy, cooperation, multilateral relations, human rights, engagement

THE EUROPEAN UNION'S FOREIGN POLICY on the European continent has always shifted according to the economic or political context. Since the fall of the *Iron Curtain*, the EU has been aware of the need to connect with Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and possibly Central Asia. Subsequently, cooperation with the EU was conditional on gratification of human rights, democracy and rule of law. In many cases, these restrictions did not have the estimated effect, the modifications requested by the EU were not respected, some states being often more concerned with foreign policy with the great Russian neighbour, being incapable of, or not willing, to achieve or even simulate at least a new version of *finlandisation* between West and East. EU policies are intended to establish better links with more Eastern European countries. Maybe for economic, social or political reasons, these efforts have

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often tested the patience of the Russian Federation, that feeling cornered and without its classic spheres of influence, counterattacked, establishing its own program of cooperation with neighbouring states.

One of the best examples of such a state is Belarus, properly viewed as a *minor Russia*. Considered by many a shadowy state, it is accused as being the last dictatorship in Europe. The main problem of EU is that the state is strongly influenced by the Russian Federation, being a situation capable of explaining itself as a game of influence and power. In recent years, EU and Belarus have set some common working points, but the process of partnership and cooperation is cumbersome and unstable. In the current context of Europe's political, social and economic events, it is interesting to note how much EU can maintain a special and constant interest for a state like Belarus. This article attempts to capture the evolution of relations between EU and Belarus, to identify current problems and to analyse some general lines of future relations between the two entities. In this sense, I will consider in the first part of the article issues related to the legal relationship with economic implications by analysing the status of the concluded agreements, which are subsequently explained through human rights dialogues. I would first like to see the possibility of differentiating energy strategies/cooperation and democracy/human rights, but also to what extent EU regulations and policies have an impact on Belarusian domestic law.

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### Legal and contractual framework

Initially, the European Communities' policy towards Belarus was indistinguishable from its approach towards the other Western Newly Independent States (WNIS). This approach was based on the TCA (Trade and Cooperation Agreement) concluded between the European Economic Community and the Soviet Union in 1989 and which was also assimilated by the former Soviet states after the dissolution of the USSR. Since the TCA contains general provisions on recognition, equality, competition, etc. there was a need for new agreements containing complex and less general provisions. In 1993, for example, the young Belarusian state and the European Union began negotiations on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), signed two years later. Similarly to EU relations with Ukraine, policies originally aimed at freeing the WNIS from the remaining Soviet nuclear warheads. "On the Union's full agenda, relations with Belarus and the other WNIS were, however, overshadowed by EU's internal evolution and the gradual integration of East Central Europe into Western institutional structures"(Löwenhardt 2005: 27).

Therefore, the first period was marked by relative disinterest and neglect from the side of the EU. When and if this indifference finally ended is disputed. While there are some signs that this lack of concern has continued to be a driving force behind EU policies, the advance of populist Alexander Lukashenka, who assumed the presidency after a landslide victory in 1994, is commonly regarded as a turning point towards a more concerned EU approach. The first key event that compressed directly on the relationship was the EU's response to the November 1996 referendum by which Lukashenka established his firm grip over the country. In its 1997 Council Conclusions, the Union failed to recognize the referendum, constitutional changes made by the president, as well as the new "puppet" parliament. In addition, it has devised a catalogue of measures to penalize the emerging dictatorship, including non-ratification of the PCA (Davidonis 2001), although ratified by Belarus. Nothing new here, but it was of critical importance in the case of Belarus since Brussels had no contractual basis and therefore no institutional framework for official dialogue with Minsk. Thus, following Lukashenka's 1996 constitutional coup, the EU has frozen multilateral relations with the top representatives of the Belarusian government by excluding Belarus from the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). This opened the door to individual free trade, unofficial negotiations and *ad hoc* coalition-building.

In this overall framework, the Eastern Partnership (EaP) was launched in Prague 2009 with the Eastern Dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy, which included Republic of Armenia, Georgia, Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Belarus, Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine. The Partnership's main objective is to accelerate political association and further economic integration between the EU and the Eastern Neighbours, and to support their political and socio-economic reforms. "Belarusian" official response to the Eastern Partnership initiative can be described as "positively pragmatic." "Positive" in the sense that the initiative can improve relations, both political and economic, and "pragmatic" in the sense that cooperation with the EU is an invaluable tool for Belarus's economic development and for increasing its exports to EU markets (Ulakhovich 2011: 82).

According to Belarusian experts (both government and independent), EaP was to bring some important and positive long-term effects through energy cooperation and a Memorandum of Understanding to create a *joint management and even ownership of pipelines*. These understandings will lead to a reduction in visa costs and bureaucracy in the future, a forthcoming economic integration with the EU and the adoption of a free trade zone agreement, thanks to the embracing of the *acquis communautaire* and the recognition of the ECJ decisions as binding. All this should be supported by a complex program of financial support. The doubts were related to the inability

to link the two economic systems, the inconsistency of the Belarusian administration with that of the EU, for which Belarus saw a pragmatic EaP in neutral areas such as investment, migration, border control and energy transit without the adoption of measures in the field of political liberalization"(Ulakhovich 2011: 82).

However, the accusations of the 2010 presidential election have unsettled the EU which has led to Belarus's exclusion from Eastern Europe Partnership, its involvement remaining in the form of multilateral cooperation platforms such as the Civil Society Forum. No other bilateral agreement remained in force between EU and Belarus in addition to the TCA, only some exchange letters on immunities and textile exports. All co-operation is the result of conclusions of the EU's Foreign Affairs Council, (EEAS 2017) and the dialogue is conducted through the ENPI (European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument) as an open but conditional mechanism (ENPI 2012/2013). Limited participation in the ENPI and the EaP also involves limited technical and financial assistance for the State of Belarus. Between 2010 and 2016 EU-Belarus relations have been almost non-existent (apart for some technical cooperation in the EaP multilateral format). Belarus is targeting a democracy-oriented agenda and needs the EU as a source of assistance, where democracy-promoting policies have been unsuccessful for years (Kaca 2013). That's why Belarus chose to adopt PCA in 2010 within the Concept of National Security of the Republic of Belarus. With this measure, Belarus has made it clear that it is open to an active and willing dialogue and through the PCA, once ratified, to adopt EU legislative measures. In 2011, The Council of EU authorized the European Commission to start negotiations on visa facilitation (FAC 2011) as seen in the note from General Secretariat of the Council to Coreper/Council 6424/11, 18 February 2011. Belarus's main interest in cooperating with the EU is mostly based on pragmatic economic and security reasons. It is the common ground in contrast to the view that energy strategies and financial benefits must come as a result of efforts to protect fundamental human rights, democracy and rule of law.

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## Human rights dialogues

An issue so sensitive and so important is that of human rights. Belarus is accused by many international human rights organizations of restrictions on freedom of expression, freedom of association, political arrests, death sentences, persecution and many other violations of international treaties. Ever since gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, the state of Belarus has been urged by international organizations and non-governmental

bodies to ensure the protection of human rights. However, the election of President Aliaksandr Lukashenka in 1994 tightened allegations of human rights violations during the last 20 years.

In a report from Amnesty International, it is clear that, from the very first months of Belarus's presidency, Lukashenka has restricted freedom of speech and imposed censorship. A report read in the plenary session of the 1994 parliamentary session in which a member of parliament accused corruption within the presidential entourage was forbidden for publication. Following gradually adopted measures, in 1995, there were riots of employees at the Minsk subway, which led to the suppression of protests and the dismissal of more than 50 people. Violent attitudes of the authorities also existed during the commemoration of 10 years of Chernobyl tragedy, as well as during civic manifestations of protest against a possible union with the Russian Federation. During these events, civilians were beaten and arrested; the opposition leader sent in exile, an independent newspaper was closed following a referendum for the death penalty that altered the constitution ([Freedom House 2016](#)).

In 1997 two journalists were arrested for violating state border proceedings, and in the years to come, former interior minister Yury Zakharenka, opposition supporter, went missing. Also Viktor Hanchar, the first vice chairman of the Supreme Council of Belarus of the 13th Convocation and chairman of the Central Electoral Commission, businessman Anatoly Krasouski and journalist Dmitry Zavadsky, all disappeared without a trace. The Council of Europe survey have concluded that these incidents were possible with the permission and collaboration of the Belarusian authorities. In 1999 a law was passed to ban the defamation and insulting of President Lukashenka, and between 2003 and 2007 about 700 civic organizations were closed and religious equality forbidden. After the 2004 elections, investigations continued for thousands of people "despoiled" and sentenced to imprisonment or expelled for protest or destabilization charges. In addition to online censorship, the ban on the right to expression, free association, the receipt and use of foreign funds, and hundreds of journalists or opponents were arrested at home, being forbidden to leave the country for these reasons. At each election, protesters were and still are, arrested and convicted ([Freedom House 2016](#)).

All these are accusations of Belarus in which the authorities undertake arbitrary deprivation of liberty, unlawful and politically motivated killings, torture and inhuman treatment, degrading detention conditions, arbitrary arrest and detention, denial of fair justice, censorship in any area, corruption and lack transparency, discrimination and trafficking in human beings, xenophobia, racism and social stigma, forced slavery and many others. These human rights violations have continued since independence. However, in

recent years it has been found that these violations only intensify during electoral campaigns and elections, while in the rest of the period the Belarusian authorities are trying to preserve at least the appearance of respecting such rights. Furthermore, cooperation with the EU is an important counterbalance in Belarus's multi-vector foreign policy. With regard to issues of democratization, the government's position is that this is an internal affair and cannot be subject to an intimidation by the European Union. "At the same time, during 2009, Belarusian officials repeatedly stated that they were ready to listen to the advice and recommendations of the EU on the development of democracy in the country. According to them, the Belarusian government has taken some positive steps, including the adoption of a new electoral code which, according to European experts, is more consistent with EU norms and standards in the field of electoral law (Ulakhovich 2011:82). This was also a motivation to pave the way for Human Rights Dialogues between the EU and Belarus.

Human Rights Dialogues (HRD) are consultations through which the EU seeks to promote respect for fundamental human rights, democracy and the rule of law in *third world* states or organizations (Majtényi 2017). The conclusions and the evolution of these dialogues are monitored through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), which allocates funds to third parties such as civil society organizations, public and private sector non-profit organizations, local, regional or national parliamentary bodies or natural persons (EIDHR 2017). These entities play an important role in monitoring and reporting all issues that are the subject of EIDHR activity.

For example, the FIDH-Human Rights Center Viasna in July 2015 considers that since the first HRD that took place in 2009, the human rights situation in Belarus has worsened. In the report was mentioned that violations of electoral rights after the 2010 elections against civil society and the opposition were intensified through arrests, political detentions, the ban on the right to freedom of expression and association, but also on other social rights. It is noted that the EU-Minks dialogue should impose political commitments, establish and ensure the involvement of independent civil society and create a legislative and institutional framework for the protection of human rights (FIDH 2015).

However, in June 2016 a new HRD at Minks took place. Issues related to electoral rights were mainly debated in view of the parliamentary elections in Belarus. The EU's appreciation was linked to the presence of several civic organizations with whom the main issue was the fight against domestic violence. The dialogue insisted on the development of national mechanisms for the protection of human rights both in discussions with representatives of the

authorities and of the opposition (EUEA 2016). The fourth round of Human Rights Dialogue took place in July 2017 in Brussels, which insisted on implementing a National Human Rights Action Plan that also includes UN mechanisms such as the Universal Periodic Review (EUEA 2017). The next meeting will be held in 2018.

In Human Rights Watch's 2017 annual report, it is claimed that many improvements are still needed in strengthening human rights. The death penalty is still in force, activists or journalists who are aware of some aspects are prosecuted, and freedom of expression and association is still forbidden. Moreover, authorities have extended the definition of "extremism" to the detriment of citizens (Human Rights Watch 2017). However, important steps have been taken, but many argue that in relation to Belarus, economic, energy and EaP policies should not be conditioned by human rights. In addition, voices from the region have been increasingly calling on the EU to drop the talk of values and focus on its political interests, to forget about full political liberalization and focus on trade with the East, irrespective of their human rights record. President Alyaksandr Lukashenka of Belarus has repeatedly urged the EU to focus on common interests such as securing the transit of Russian gas to the EU or managing migration into the EU (Kobzova 2012:2).

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## Two Agendas?

Given that little progress has been made in the last 25 years, it should call into question EU to reconsider its strategy towards Belarus. To do so, for the first time, the EU must understand that Belarus is a particular case compared to other Eastern European countries, such as Ukraine or the Republic of Moldova. Unlike the others, Belarus remains among the only European countries that have not shown interest in joining the European Union, a position that is still maintained. Most of the EU countries concerned with the fate of Belarus consider that Belarus indisputably belongs to Russia's sphere of interests. *"This stereotypical conception implies that for the sake of maintaining the geopolitical status quo they dismiss any attempt at enthralling Belarus from Russia's embrace"*. As far as they are concerned, EU policies on Belarus should acquire Moscow's prior approval or even be implemented through Russian mediation (Marin 2011:6). That's why the relationship with Belarus must be different, not a constraint but a smart engagement. And still, why should EU engage with Belarus? Determined by its own policies to promote fundamental principles of rule of law, democracy and human rights, the EU is being preoccupied with Belarus, as a neighbouring country.

Moreover, Belarus is a transit country for Eastern gas in programs such as Yamal or Baku Initiative.

A country that is characterized by its own president as authoritarian who promises a gradual democratization for the last 20 years, can no longer receive exactly the same sanctioning policies, but to identify the best solutions contextually. The sanctions do not help changing Belarus, which at any time can isolate itself under the protection of the Russian Federation ([Preiherman 2017](#)). The EU's aim is to make progress, not to make itself inaccessible. That is why a relaxed EU can be more efficient and non-conditioning economic agreements on human rights can lead to better results, perhaps by setting two different agendas that do not interfere so often. Bilateral relations are equally important for Belarus, especially from an economic point of view. Even if there is an unrelenting loyalty to the Russian Federation, there have been situations where Belarus saw itself second place in Russia's energy policies. It is worth mentioning that Russia has scrapped plans to build a Yamal-Europe II pipeline connecting Russia to Europe through Belarus despite Lukashenko's offer of a five-year transit waiver if Russia abandoned the idea of the trans-Baltic Nord Stream pipeline ([Dura, 2008: 3](#)).

EU&Belarus is a relationship that needs to be built up in small steps, but with many compromises, it can be achieved. Both sides are interested in improving bilateral relations. Thus, even though at the beginning EaP was of "no great importance (...)", according to Uladzimir Makei- Belarus Foreign Minister, recently it is clear from Belarus's attitude to make certain changes. The need for technical and financial support is obvious, and in the last two years the relationship with the EU has seen positive developments. Belarus participates pro-actively in EaP, with negotiations on a Mobility Partnership on visa and tangible steps on Human Rights Dialogues (HRD) according to Foreign Affairs Conclusions of 15th Feb 2016. Belarus has also had an initiative on HRD in 2015 with visible results in prison conditions. Nevertheless, some attempts to reform have led the EU and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to remove certain sanctions ([Human Rights Watch 2017](#)). Unlike other periods, the EU found that improving bilateral relations has led to the lifting of restrictions, leading to Belarus's collaboration with international financial institutions, preparation for accession to the World Trade Organization, removal of textile quotas for exports. Also, in June 2017, Belarus joined the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (ESP), which supports loans for energy projects, making Belarus the most powerful Eastern Partner country in the Horizon 2020 program for research and innovation. In addition, the EU-Belarus Coordination Group was established as a policy group to oversee the further development of relations. EU helps Belarus prepare its WTO accession, and both sides have developed a



Formal Dialogue on Trade and EU-Belarus Customs Dialogue. Belarus has adopted the National Action Plan on Human Rights as a tool for reforms, also a Mobility Partnership and an Erasmus +, a program for work and academic exchanges, volunteering and project-buildings. There are still two main themes on the EU agenda: the abolition of the death penalty and the issue of nuclear safety (EAP 2017).

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However, these steps are negligible compared to what is needed, but they are better than nothing. The European Union, on one hand, does not want to kneel its values and wants its investment to be reflected. On the other hand, Belarus must be treated as a state with which a cumbersome and long-term strategy must be carried out, because it already has strong memberships and strong partnerships with the East. Belarus is currently an active member of most Eurasian integration projects: the Commonwealth of Independent States; the Russian-Belarusian Union State; the Eurasian Economic Community; the Common Security Treaty Organization, the Customs Union (CU) and the Common Economic Space (CES) of Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan. The latter two seem to be the most ambitious ones with a planned Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) to come.

It is worth mentioning that many of them are copying treaties and provisions of the EU Treaties, and perhaps in this way EU norms may indirectly become laws in Belarus. It has also been noticed that some EU provisions have been copied into Belarusian laws even though they do not have an explicit reference to EU law. Areas like environment, veterinary medicine, public health nutrition, and other general standards have been found in some adopted regulations, without these being considered as EU regulations or interpreted by courts and the Supreme Court of Belarus on the basis of EU principles (Karliuk 2014: 238-245).

With a strong and firm Kremlin, Belarus is not very involved in a close partnership with the EU, making the Eastern Partnership with an uncertain future in terms of links with Belarus. Maybe EU strategy is not appropriate, dialogue and diplomacy should take another approach, EU's PR is not appealing and satisfying for Minsk, or simply because *Moscow's gravity* is too strong.

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## Return to “EUROPE”

Doru Cristian TODORESCU\*

**Abstract:** *Despite the restriction imposed, the Western democracy model remained an attraction for central-eastern European people during the communist period. Throughout the Central and the East of the continent, in the aftermath of collapsing the communism, regimes and political system, economic orientations and foreign policy options have been changed. The enthusiasm of the Eastern European citizens towards the return to „Europe” was very high at the beginning of the last decade of the twentieth century.*

**Key Words:** *European Union, Central-Eastern Europe, integration process, after-Cold War.*

**C**OLLAPSING THE COMMUNIST REGIMES in Central and Eastern Europe at the end of the ninth decade of the twentieth century meant, for the countries entering in the sphere of Soviet domination at the end of the Second World War, a return to the European democratic values. The process was not an easy one, since the decades of Communism had put their mark not only on the internal and external political life of each country, but also on the mentalities, lifestyles, the options and the way of being of hundreds of millions of people in the Eastern half of the European continent. Therefore, despite the restriction imposed, the Western democracy model remained an attraction for central-eastern European people during the communist era. However, even whether the events from 1989 gave the chance of returning to that model, the success of achieving the desired democratic regime depended on several factors.

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First of all were internal factors, which meant the way in which every communist country perceived the values of Western democracy and the manner in which authorities in these countries managed the internal crisis. (Pușcaș and Sălăgean 2010: 91). Throughout the Central and the East of the continent, in the aftermath of collapsing the communism, regimes and political system, economic orientations and foreign policy options have been changed. In this paper, we will focus our concern on changes in the foreign policy options which have made since 1990, in these countries.

At the beginning, it is worth noting that it is not in our intention to carry out an exhaustive analysis of Central and Eastern European diplomatic initiatives in the aftermath of 1989.

Our approach is intended to be directed mainly towards the younger generation, which was not contemporary with the events that took place at the end of the 20th century. This is an analytical and essayistic approach, by which we intend to bring into attention the essential options for the further evolutions of the continent.

Since 1985 the Cold War had known its terminal phase, and diplomacy had become the main field of action. The United States President, George Bush, rushed the collapse of totalitarian regimes in Europe. On the one hand, he maintained a permanent dialogue with Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, from whom he obtained the promise that the Red Army would not intervene in cases of domestic changes in Eastern Europe. On the other hand, he supported morally, politically and financially the opposition in this region. Finally, the so-called “John Paul II effect” had a decisive role in promoting democratic values in Eastern Europe (Pușcaș and Sălăgean 2010: 92). The 1985-1991 period saw a dense and rhythm of unmatched diplomatic life. The result of diplomatic efforts in the second half of the nine decade of the twentieth century was surprising for contemporaries of that era. The crucial point in East-West relations was the meeting in Malta on 2nd to 3rd of December 1989 between George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev. And as history has shown, the meeting in Malta marked the establishment of chose, honest and trustful relations between the United States of America and the Soviet Union. (Vlad 2006: 657-668). Thus the consequences of the new Soviet-American relations were essential for the

internal and external policy decision of the other countries and European institutional structures.

It is already well known that in the period after removing of the communist regime, the Central and Eastern European states have expressed their intention to become part of the Western political, economic and security structures. However, while the Soviet Union still existed, the European Community was more reluctant in adopting measures for a fast integration into European political and security structures. The focus of the West was especially on the way in which the economic and political reforms were implemented in those countries, especially on how the transition to democracy was been carried out. On the other hand, the enthusiasm of the Eastern European citizens towards the return to „Europe“, which they were forced to abandon since 1945, was very high at the beginning of the last decade of the twentieth century. All states liberated by communism have expressed their desire to become part of the European Community. During its progress, the European integration process has also accompanied by a special interest in the academia. From this interest resulted, at that time, both a literature dedicated to the history of European countries or the dynamics of integration, and a theoretical debate in which new paradigms were developed and created. (Alexandrescu 2010: 43)

Changes in foreign policy priorities were not just on the „Eastern“ side. Meanwhile, Western European countries have had to adopt not only national foreign policy strategies, but also a single European strategy for former communist Europe. The process was the more necessary as the last decade of the twentieth century brought, after the unification of Germany, the change of actors and power relations in Central and Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union disappeared at the end of 1991. Czechoslovakia was split into two new states, and Yugoslavia disintegrated as a result of an internal war that lasted almost a decade. Instead of all those states, new ones appeared, with their own internal problems, with options and interests, more or less adapted to the realities existing in the last years of the twentieth century.

Regarding the situation on the continent, changes on the European politic landscape after 1989 led to a process of rethinking the structure of the European Community toward a political union and economic and monetary union. At the legal basis for the new continental structures was the Maastricht

Treaty. The Treaty re-launched the European construction, the most important objective being the completion of the Single Market, achieving the freedom of movement of services, persons and capital throughout the European Union. (Ivan 2014: 97). ). In the same time, the Maastricht Treaty established a Common Foreign and Security Policy for the EU. The European Political Cooperation was replaced by the CFSP, which established the second pillar of a three-pillared Union. The CFSP should have saved the common values, the fundamental interests and the independence of the organisation. Its security and its member states would have been strengthened in all ways. At the same time, this second pillar had as mission to preserve peace and strengthen international security, to promote international cooperation, to develop and consolidate democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. (Bindi 2010: 26-27)

The accession process would take place as each country applying for membership fulfilled the economic and political conditions and obligations imposed by decision-making structures at European level. These were natural requests, in conditions in which since 1950 the degree of European integration has increased both in terms of geographic boundaries, and in terms of the development of common policies and institutional structures. Thus, from an economic community of six members, it was reached a political union comprising nearly 30 countries. (Bărbulescu 2005: 67). The criteria for the European Union membership had become more complex and stringent. At the Copenhagen European Council, aspiring members were expected to ensure the stability of democratic institutions, to govern by the rule of law, to have a functioning market economy, and to comply with all membership obligations. Two years later, in December 1995, the Madrid European Council added to the Copenhagen Criteria the desideratum that candidate countries should have adjusted their administrative structures so that the necessary conditions for integration would be created. The Copenhagen Criteria were thought to promote stability and prosperity through Europe and to contribute to the constant and peaceful integration of the continent. Accession negotiations challenged the candidate countries to meet the provisions included in the 31 chapters of the *acquis communautaire*, while benefiting from the European Union financial assistance aimed at supporting the accession process. At the



Luxembourg Summit in December 1997, the European Council decided that the candidate countries would have to incorporate the *acquis* into their national legislations and to apply it. The European Union kept its commitment to the irreversible enlargement process and concluded the accession talks with the first ten candidate countries at the December 2002 Summit in Copenhagen. The ten nations (of which eight were former communist countries) had to pass and implement reforms that would ensure market economy conditions, support competition, and would generate change in all areas of activity. In 2004, the European Union concluded the accession negotiations with Bulgaria and Romania, tentatively (that time) scheduled to join the Union in 2007. (Marine 2011: 72-73)

As far as we are concerned, retrospectively, more than ten years after the accession of the last former communist states to the European Union, we can say that the whole process represented the reunification of the peoples of the continent into a constitutional framework that would facilitate their joint development under conditions of peace and stability. Joint Action across Europe involved an effort by Europeans to achieve good cooperation, identify common interests and especially to rid the fears that have marked the relations between the countries. And the experience gained by the Member States, as well as the successive enlargements have caused permanent adjustments and changes to the Community institutional framework, as well as to the decision-making procedures with the positive impact on the subsequent developments at both national and continental level. (Sălăgean and Todorescu 2010: 34). And even during the crisis and conflicts that have taken place on the continent, this supra-national system – the European Union – has proven to have a long way before it develops and becomes an entity that meets the expectations of each partner. And, the Franco-German initiative since the beginning of the Cold War proved to be a success.

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## Book Review

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**The meanings of nudity in Medieval Art. Edited by Sherry C. M. Lindquist (Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012), 356 pp.+ill, ISBN: 978-1-4094-2284-6**

**Florin-Aron PĂDUREAN**

FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, the volume is eye-catching by the intriguing title and the exceptional typographical quality. It becomes even more arresting once one starts reading the first pages and progressively discovers a well-rounded collective study, combining thirteen articles from twelve contributors.

Medieval sexuality is a much-debated topic in Western academic research, but nevertheless the medieval nude was only tangentially approached. Also, until recently, the subject failed to be completely relevant for art history scholars, very often being ignored, insufficiently discussed or stereotypically presented. This is perhaps the reason why editor Sherry Lindquist declares, in the closing of her introductory article, that the volume is intended to call attention to the significance of the medieval nude “as a category”.

But what makes the volume truly ambitious is not just its thematic intent, but also the potential to become a methodological model, as it configures not merely a subject matter, but also as historiographical approach: “The naked body, when it does appear in Western medieval art, must be understood as operating in a complex matrix of socially coded meanings: what is revealed is

more evident when studied in the context of what is not shown” (p. 27). Images compensate the structural and intentional limits of the written text, conveying what should not or cannot be verbally expressed. Since medieval art was predominantly religious, medieval iconographical nudity was, despite the apparent antagonism, religiously connected as well. Perhaps the most important examples are the biblical moments involving nudity, such as the before-sin Adam and Eve, Noah’s drunkenness or Christ’s baptism and crucifixion, essential in the theological discourse and therefore mandatory to be visually represented. This thematic register, consistently analyzed in the volume, included a general difficulty in representing altogether socially sensitive images and insufficiently detailed by the biblical text. Artists were required to make iconographical decisions, reinterpret the text and confer contextual significance.

By focusing on such elusive manifestations, in an effort to uncover the potential intentions of the art fabricant and the potential perception of the public, the volume is indeed, as the title suggests, not merely an investigation on nudity, but on its meanings. As a result, the volume, although disciplinary intended as an art history study, reveals itself to the reader as a concomitant cultural-historical survey of West-European society, prevailing in its medieval times.

With regard to this chronological context, the collective effort of the contributors is particularly substantial in covering the subject from late antiquity to fifteenth century – a period of time traditionally considered to be a hiatus of the nude as artistic genre –, thus proving that artistically represented nudity is a phenomenon preceding Renaissance. The authors succeed in demonstrating that nudity was still used in medieval art works, while providing a thorough argument that the classical nude was still referred to, studied, emulated or used as iconographical paradigm. It is surprising to discover that Venus, the nominal embodiment of the classical nude, was not reborn in Renaissance, but was perpetuated during the Middle Ages – visually and semantically – as erotic sign, as Jane C. Long so thoroughly demonstrates in her article.

As often in this volume, a decisive factor in understanding the semantic variations of visual nudity is a gender-focused approach. Different sexual identities of the male/female unclothed body could already signify different meanings, even antagonistic. For instance, nude feminine representations

were generally perceived as being negative. Reminder of the primordial sinner, Eve, the feminine nude was also an embodiment of the sin. On the other hand, male nudity frequently suggested modesty or virtue. With regard to the Romanesque sculpture, Kirk Ambrose observed that “the male body was often deemed the most suitable vehicle for imagining the exemplary pursuit of the religious life” (p. 76). However, the reader will discover different variations, as one should keep in mind Sherry Lindquist’s advice, that there was no primary meaning of nudity in medieval art, but meanings.

A fair example of such variations can be found in Elizabeth Moore Hunt paper, discussing the entertainers – jugglers, jesters, minstrels and acrobats - in the margins of some manuscripts from northern France and Flanders, dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Century. Mimicking profane gestures as far as performing sexual intercourse, the marginal naked jongleur was a multivalent signifier, perceived differently by the male public, in contrast to the mixed or feminine one.

An interesting approach on male nudity can be found in Madeline Caviness’ paper, proving, based on texts and pictures from 11<sup>th</sup> through the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, that male nude representations were, to a certain extent, received with disquietude. *Virilophobia*, as the author denominates this attitude, led to acts of suppression and censorship. Focusing on the biblical episode when Noah is gazed upon naked by one of his sons – treated as a taboo, but also as a case –, Caviness manages to outline social concerns of artists and reactions of viewers, raising attention to a wide range of potential prejudices and anxieties.

In an examination of Jean, Duke of Berry’s prayer book, the *Belles Heures*, Martha Easton discusses the symbolism of nudity, in a beautiful parallel between the clothed body and the unclothed one. The beauty of the female body, whether chaste or sinful, can express powerful meanings even when not naked, as women’s clothes are as well sexually charged, becoming, in some cases, expression of the physical sin and instrument of corruption for the male gazer.

Several authors disclose fascinating cases of symbolic somatoscopy, unmasking different significances of different body elements. For instance, the absence or the presence of the body hair, as Penny Howell Jolly observed, implied different meanings. Although a superficial attribute, body hair allowed a complete reassessment of the human person, conferring positive or negative

roles, especially when correlated with the gender. In an analysis of representations of Adam and Eve by Jan van Eyck and Hugo van der Goes, Linda Seidel underlines the importance of human flesh, in a natural state and in a divinely set equilibrium with the natural world when uncovered.

Representing nudity implied inherent difficulties, since the artistic decisions of exhibiting, eliminating or covering the genitalia were not simple formal adjustments, but had profound ideological implications. Veronique Dalmasso approaches this issue, demonstrating how nudity (either explicit or elusive) becomes instrumental in dosing up sanctity or humanity in the bivalent nature of Jesus Christ. Debating on the same issue of the naked adult Christ and its iconographical rendering, Corine Schleif deconstructs “scopic regimes of covering and exposing”, with concomitant “performances of viewing and refusing to view”. These acts were not always guided by the principles of the established social hierarchy, but they even occasionally contested these hierarchies.

The reader will be surprised to discover also medieval artworks that under religious purposes conveyed sexual intimations, or even erotic artistic productions that came to be associated with religious environments. In an excellent article, Diane Wolfthal discusses the frontispiece of a Book of Hours – depicting a nude bather – as a paradigm and decoder of medieval erotica, insisting on a plausible concomitant reception: the image as reminder of sin, but also invitation of sexual pleasure. Similar scenes, as guise for arousing images, are also investigated by Paulla Nutall, in a paper that addresses nudity as pictorial choice and public spectacle and attests that the tradition of the nude existed in northern Europe prior to the Italian Renaissance and, to some degree, influenced the Venetian nude.

Despite its multi-author nature, the volume is an undivided report on iconographical nudity and an unflagging inquiry into the medieval social-artistic dynamics, examining equally artists, the commissioning clergy and gentry and, not least, audience. Although centred on the Western cultural horizon, the study proves to be, on account of the collected information and methodological approach, a beneficial support for any potential researcher of paralleled iconography in medieval Eastern Europe.