

## **A New Beginning. The "Euro-Atlantic Studies" Journal at its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

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I am honored to announce the publication of the first issue of the new series of the "Euro-Atlantic Studies", the journal of the Centre for Euro-Atlantic Studies – a research body of the University of Bucharest, Department of International Relations and World History of the Faculty of History.

I strongly need to express my gratitude for the team who made this issue possible. First of all, Mrs Mihaela Mustatea's contribution was outstanding in terms of time and effort: not only that she edited the texts and patiently went back and forth with the authors, but our colleague deserves the credit and our thanks for her tremendous work of indexing the journal in the CEEOL database. Another "round of applause" must be offered to Mr. Alin Matei who kept the team together with his calm and serious attitude and whose scientific expertise was invaluable. A special mention should refer to Ms. Teodora Vîrlan, our young and enthusiastic member who was the wizard of image editing. Of course, the 'Thank you' section would not be complete without expressing our appreciation for the University of Bucharest Publishing House team (Mrs. Irina Hrițcu and Mrs. Florina Floriță) who so kindly and professionally worked with us all through this endeavors' length.

Last but not least, we do not forget that without Professor Constantin Bușe, the "Euro-Atlantic Studies" journal would not have existed at all. These pages are dedicated to our Professor.

### **The Centre**

Looking back in time, the favorite pursuit of a historian, the year of 1996 represented for Romania another moment of political turmoil, government change and population's high expectation not only for a better life but also for a rapid accomplishment of a major national interest, the Euro-Atlantic integration. By no means a coincidence and in the same year, the academic studies of International Relations at the University of Bucharest achieved a new and more ambitious momentum when Professor Constantin Bușe, then vice-chancellor of the University, set

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up the Centre for Euro-Atlantic Studies. At that time, research and training programs in the complex domain of international relations were scarce and confined to the personal endeavours of some professors and independent researchers mainly from the Faculties of History, Political Sciences and Sociology. Taking into consideration the need for academic expertise and university courses in the field of Euro-Atlantic studies, the Centre had been designed by Professor Bușe to pursue both the goals of preparing a scientific research activity in the realm of international relations according to Romania's Euro-Atlantic integration objectives and of developing training programs and educative tools for enrolled students, experts and general public. It was, undoubtedly, an endeavour meant to reposition the University not only at the heart of the scientific debate but also as the leading provider of knowledge to the general public, thus fulfilling the dual mission of the higher education institutions.

From the beginning, the Centre was aiming to build a research and training network involving researchers and professors from the University of Bucharest and other Romanian and international leading research institutes or universities as well as senior diplomats from the Romanian Foreign Ministry. Under the guidance of Professor Bușe this goal has been achieved by promoting a think-tank type of research in the field of Euro-Atlantic security, European integration and international relations and resulted in providing a high-level expertise to the intended audience. Hundreds of articles, dozens of books, many conferences and workshops, as well as research projects won by the Centre of Euro-Atlantic testify to this scientific accomplishment.

The second main objective of the Centre, a very ambitious one, was to raise the level of education in the field of international relations and Euro-Atlantic studies not only for the University of Bucharest' students but also for governmental or non-governmental experts and decision-makers in order to achieve a much better understanding of the current trends in international relations. The effort to establish a special curriculum for the domain of international relations and Euro-Atlantic studies in the University of Bucharest was one of the main purposes of the Centre's development and a sustained preoccupation for the Director and his team. It can be said unequivocally that, in more than 20 years of activity this goal was exceptionally fulfilled.

Courses in *History of Euro-Atlantic Integration*, *Euro-Atlantic Security Institutions*, and *The Changing Pattern of International Relations in the Post-Cold War Era* were for the first time introduced to the students in 1997, the same year when the first generation of students enrolled in the Master degree program in *International Relations* offered by the Faculty of History. Since then, a Bachelor degree program in International Relations and European Studies and four other M.A. programs (*History and Practice of the International Relations*, *Politics and Society in the 20th Century*, *Diplomacy and International Politics* and *Diplomatic Techniques*) were designed, developed and sustained with the contribution of the Centre for Euro-Atlantic Studies and its members.

The two educational grants awarded to the Centre by the European Commission for the action "Jean Monnet European Module: European Integration – History, Policies and Politics" (2001-2006 and 2007-2012) deserve a special mention. More than 1000 students from different universities were introduced, by the Centre's experts, to the historical, political, economic, institutional and legal dimensions of the European

integration. Moreover, similar training courses were developed for the Romanian government' officials (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Defense, Ministry of Interior) between 2001 and 2005. Not least, the students were involved within the Centre in different research programs and other activities (internships, seminars and workshops), according to their abilities and interests.

A brief review such as this one cannot cover all the accomplishments of 22 years of activity and, to be honest, it does not intend to list any of the failures or underachievement. Every institution has its bitter moments but what it really matters is that we, the members and associates of the Centre for Euro-Atlantic Studies, do not forget the mission proposed by Professor Constantin Bușe, and we strive to continue his legacy.

### The Journal

In 1997, a year after the establishment of the Centre for Euro-Atlantic Studies, Professor Constantin Bușe initiated the ambitious project of a journal in history and international relations, *Euro-Atlantic Studies*, a publication designed to disseminate the Centre's members research activity results. From the start, the journal was generously opened to contributions of various national and international experts in the field. In the words of the Director:

*"The scientific contributions of the full and associate members of the Centre will be published in Romanian and in foreign languages in the Centre's magazine, Euro-Atlantic Studies, which comes into life with this very issue. The magazine will also include contributions from outside the Centre, related to our field of concern and which will be published according to their value and relevance. The magazine is meant to be the instrument of this research programme and it is opening its pages to our colleagues and friends, specialists both from Romania and from abroad."*<sup>1</sup>

From 1998 to 2009, under the editorial guidance of Professor Bușe, there were published 14 volumes of *Euro-Atlantic Studies* comprising more than 140 essays, analyses and other academic works signed by prestigious scholars and academics from Romania, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Russia. In addition, the journal was home for a number of contributions belonging to several eminent Master and Doctoral students who had their publishing debut in the pages of *Euro-Atlantic Studies*. Unfortunately, for reasons beyond our control, the journal's publication has suffered a major set-back since 2009 but now, nine years later, the Center's team is trying to resume this project according to its initial mission.

The scientific works submitted to the journal covered topics from the history of the Cold War to the most recent events and evolutions of the political, diplomatic, military, security and economic international relations of the time. A main recurrent theme was the investigation and the assessment of the Euro-Atlantic integration process

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<sup>1</sup> Constantin Bușe, "Director's Column", *Euro-Atlantic Studies*, Vol.1/1998, University of Bucharest, Centre for Euro-Atlantic Studies, București, 1998, p. 3

and Romania's contribution before and after the admission in NATO and in the European Union. Somehow, browsing *Euro-Atlantic Studies* volumes of that period, one historian from the present might detect which were the most important challenges coming from the international realm, imagined or perceived as such by the academic community from Romania and abroad. And the result of such a perceptions inquiry might be a concentric map (from a Euro-Atlantic core to an African or Far East periphery) of concerns and hopes, a mixture of pessimistic and optimistic expectations.

### The world

In 1997, when Professor Bușe was planning the publishing of the Euro-Atlantic Studies, Romania seemed to be at some distance from the Euro-Atlantic world. The accession process of Romania in the European and Euro-Atlantic institutions (mainly EU and NATO) was running slow with a lot of question marks attached. The negotiations were unfolding without major achievements and, in the European Union's perspective, Romania had a deficit of democracy added to a low performance economy that was still in a cumbersome transition. And yet, in 1998, European Union seemed very much committed to the goals of increased integration and further enlargement. Under the United Kingdom's presidency, the European Council (after the European Commission) decided that 11 member states satisfy the conditions for adopting the single currency on 1st of January 1999 and the European Central Bank was established. As well, in March 1998, a Ministerial meeting finally launched the accession process for 11 applicant countries (Romania included) but the prospects of the full membership in the near future were uncertain. As for the accession process to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the summer of 1997 brought the first visit to Bucharest of an American President after 1989, but also a general disappointment when the same President, William Jefferson Clinton, publicly announced that the United States will support the invitation for joining NATO of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic only. The Romanian society was eager to become a full member of these institutions but the level of knowledge about the responsibilities, the hardships and the legal and administrative reforms implied was still reserved to a thin layer of professionals involved in the negotiation process. In brief, government and population alike were caught in a turmoil of hopes and fears.

And fear was somehow justified because in 1998, the year of the first issue of Euro-Atlantic Studies, the world was still as insecure as ever and the Cold War bipolar logic was replaced by multidimensional and multipolar, international and domestic challenges to the American hegemony. Even if now we are observing the deadly dangers of the present, a short reminder of some events from the past might illustrate the perils of 20 years ago. For instance, 1998 was the year of the Fatwā "Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders" issued in February by Osama Bin Laden and the leaders of Islamist groups from Bangladesh, Egypt and Pakistan requiring every Muslim to kill Americans, civilians and military alike. Six months later, in August, 200 people were killed in the bombing of United States Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and President Clinton ordered cruise missile strikes in Afghanistan and Sudan.

In the same month of February 1998 in Kosovo the clashes between Kosovo Liberation Army and the military forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (composed only by Serbia and Montenegro) escalated to a full war and into an international affairs crisis. After Resolution 1199 was adopted in September by the United Nations Security Council, requiring the parties in Kosovo to end the hostilities and establish a ceasefire and, after NATO's orders for airstrikes against Yugoslav forces issued in October, an agreement was reached. Two months later the ceasefire was broken and the killings resumed.

In May 1998, the world discovered new sources of mortal dangers when India and then Pakistan conducted multiple underground nuclear tests. Completely indifferent to the international community anger, both countries, long-standing enemies, demonstrated their will to escalate their conflict to the ultimate level.

In the Middle East the hopes of a solid step toward peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians were raising in October when, at the White House, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat signed an agreement but in December, after other confrontations, the implementation of the accord was again stopped. Meanwhile, Saddam Hussein was continuing his deadly gamble with the United Nations and the United States and after many months of refusals and half-hearted acceptances of the UN Resolutions, the United Nations Special Commission inspectors were expelled from Iraq triggering, in December 1998, a four days bombing campaign conducted by American and British airplanes which did almost nothing to de-escalate the situation and to solve the issue of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. However, the international community had also others directions to look for crisis and death because for Africa, the year 1998 meant the beginning of the Guinea-Bissau Civil War and marked the outbreak of the deadly Second Congo War which involved no less than nine African countries, a dozen of armed groups and resulted in millions of lost lives.

The same year, a glimmer of hope appeared when a decades' long bloody conflict in Northern Ireland was ended on the "Good Friday" of April 10th through the Belfast Agreement, but still, the year 1998 ended in confusion when the entire world was staring with astonishment at the United States domestic crisis. In December, the U.S. House of Representative initiated the impeachment of President Clinton (the second case in the history of the United States) and deferred the matter for trial to the U.S. Senate.

For the next twenty years the international relations were dominated by uncertainties, disputes, crisis and conflicts in the Euro-Atlantic area or in its proximity. The 9/11 terrorist attacks, the wars in Afghanistan and in Iraq, the global economic crisis of 2008, the Arab Spring, the rise and fall of ISIS, the Syrian civil war, the worsening of the United States-Russia relations, the aggressive nuclear rhetoric of North Korea or the Brexit are just a few of the disturbing political and economic events that shaped new and perilous paths for the development of international relations in the 21st century.

At the same time, the realm of international relations has continued to change impressively in terms of its very nature. The technological developments of the information age, the unprecedented interconnectivity hence interdependence between people around the globe, the explosion of social networks and the abundance of almost

free and instant knowledge available just a click away on a more powerful and cheaper device, decisively contributed to this change. New actors, ranging from international NGOs to multinational information giants as Google (founded in 1998!), Amazon or Facebook, and from transnational associations to mere individuals, are now challenging the central role played by the states and governments, forging new sources of conflict and new dimensions of cooperation.

Fast-forward to present days, one can observe the magnitude of changes for the evolution of Romania. A six-fold increase in GDP, eight times in exports and seven times for the average wage combined to a sevenfold decrease in inflation and two times in unemployment are markers of a better performance of the Romanian economy. Full membership of NATO (2004) ensured Romania's security more than ever and the accession in the European Union in 2007 undoubtedly provided development and prosperity for the Romanian people. In 2019, Romania will hold the presidency of the Council of the European Union and will bear, for six months, the responsibilities of setting the agenda and coordinating the policies of the European Union. And yet, in the year of the Centennial celebration of Romania's Great Union of 1918, this image is shaded by continuous political scandals, high-level corruption and poor administrative performances. In that domestic context, it may prove difficult for Romania to cope with the international challenges provided by an unsettled world.

A brief report on the state of the world as seen at the end of the year 2018 might emphasize some troubled features. In the last years the integrated Europe was severely tested by the economic crisis, the terrorist attacks (from ISIS militants, local jihadists or radicalized men in France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Spain), the dramatic migrant crisis and the internal tensions caused by the rise of populist movements and leaders. And yet the biggest provocation of all is still to come after the British referendum of 2016 when a slim majority of the population voted for UK's withdrawal from the European Union. The Brexit is currently under negotiations and the economic and political future of the Union is subject to unprecedented risks.

The problems of Middle East in 2018 are far from a peaceful resolution and the conundrum of the Israeli-Palestinian relations was somehow eclipsed by the civil war in Syria which lead to more than half a million deaths, over five millions refugees and a very intense humanitarian, diplomatic and military international crisis. International organizations, the United States, Russia, Turkey, Iran, other countries from the region and extremist Islamic groups are engaged in various degrees and for different reasons in a deadly conflict that threatens not only the regional stability but the peace of the world at large.

Signs of peril also seem to come from Russia. The aggressive stance of President Vladimir Putin following the annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014, the military support of the brutal dictatorship of Assad regime's in Syria, the illegal involvement in the United States' elections of 2016 or the deadly subversive operations in the United Kingdom remind us of the Soviet Union's behaviour during the Cold War, a period the world thought was in the past. The use of chemical weapons by the Syrian government, the nuclear rearmament of Russia, United States and China and the possible withdrawal of the US from the INF Treaty are very palpable threats for world's peace once again. And the list of dangers may very well continue. In 2017 the entire world kept its breath

when the North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un announced new nuclear and ballistic missile tests and engaged in a rhetorical showdown with the new President of the United States, Donald Trump. International sanctions, the diplomatic involvement of China and the US' military pressure succeeded in averting the nuclear crisis and in 2018, after the meeting between the President of South Korea Moon Jae-In and the leader of the North Korea, a surprising summit was held in June in Singapore between Kim Jong-Un and President Trump. The Joint Statement signed by the two leaders expressed the commitments of both sides to build a lasting peace in the Korean Peninsula and to work for the denuclearization of the region.

As one can easily observe, the world today is still in turmoil and all these challenges must be met with a rational, intelligent and consistent resoluteness. The role of the scientific study of the international relations and the mission we are retrieving now through the new series of the "Euro-Atlantic Studies" journal is best underlined by the words of Professor Constantin Bușe:

*"It is obvious that in solving these issues the politicians and the regional or global security institutions have a decisive role but it is also not to be neglected the contribution of the analysts, the experts and of the academic and university structures in finding/suggesting some solutions. The opinions and the points of view expressed in the pages of our magazine by the researchers and the members of the universities devoted to international relations study and also by our younger friends are the sign of the Romanian society's preoccupation for analyzing and understanding the political and military events that are taking place. Observing and researching the geopolitical and geostrategic conditions in which Romania takes action today becomes more necessary as the international situation tends to be more complicated and as some differences of opinion concerning the right way in finding the solutions amplify."*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> idem, "Director's Column", *Euro-Atlantic Studies*, Vol.5/2002, p. 3