

VISEGRAD / INSIGHT

ISSN 2084-8250 | £4.99 | PLN 16.00

1(5)|2014



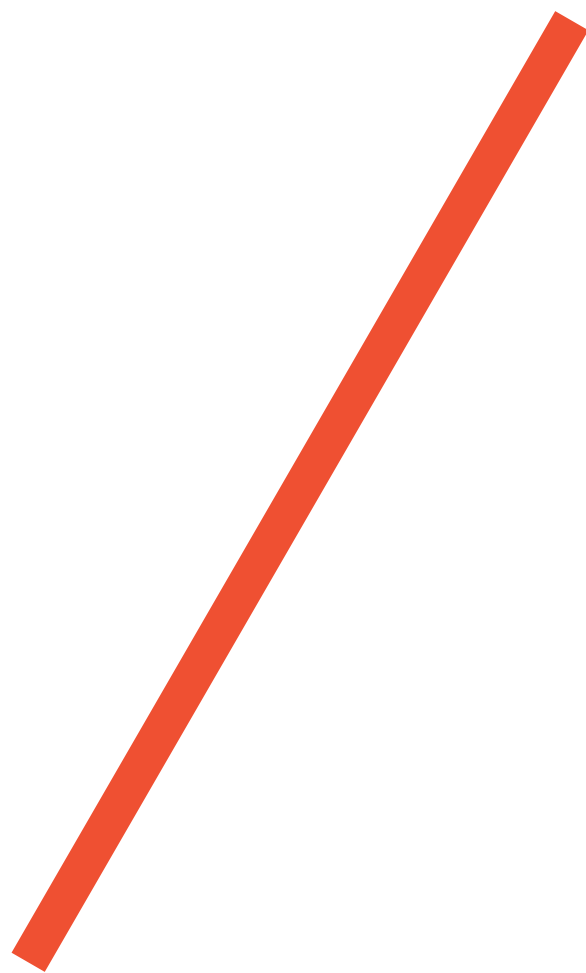
MAIDAN MIGRANTS DEMOCRACY

Central Europe. Granted.

The International Visegrad Fund supports the development of civil society and contacts between people in the Visegrad region and other countries in Central Europe, the Western Balkans and Countries of the Eastern Partnership. With the annual budget of €8 million (as of 2014) the fund operates several grant programs and mobility projects (scholarships, fellowships, artist residencies). By the end of 2013, more than 4,000 grant projects and nearly 2,000 individual scholarships and residencies were financed in total sum of €54 million. The fund's annual budget consists of equal contributions from the governments of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia.



- Legend:**
- Grants**
 - x Sites with 1–3 grant projects
 - ✕ Sites with 3–8 grant projects
 - ✕ Sites with 9 or more grant projects
 - Residencies**
 - ◆ VARP sites (*host institutions*)
 - Scholarships**
 - ◻ Scholarship sites (*host higher education institutions*)



VISEGRAD / INSIGHT

5 (1) | 2014

CIRCULATION: 6,000
FREQUENCY: twice a year

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Wojciech Przybylski (Res Publica Nowa, PL)

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Anna Wójcik (Res Publica Nowa, PL)

ECONOMY AND BUSINESS

Martin Ehl (Hospodářské noviny, CZ)

INTELLIGENT MIND

Éva Karádi (Magyar Lettre International, HU) and Marta Šimečková (www.salon.eu.sk, SK)

BOOKS

Katarína Kucbelová (SK)

INTERVIEW AND COMMUNITIES

Máté Zombory (HU)

ARTS

Anna Wójcik (Res Publica Nowa, PL)

VISEGRAD ABROAD

in cooperation with Europeum (CZ)

LANGUAGE EDITOR

Vera Schulmann (USA)

PHOTO EDITOR

Jędrzej Sokołowski (Res Publica Nowa, PL)

SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR

Hayden Berry (Res Publica Nowa, UK)

CONFERENCE PR

Emilia Zareba (Res Publica Nowa, PL)
zareba.emilia@gmail.com

GRAPHIC DESIGN

 RZECZYOBRAZKOWE.PL

PUBLISHED BY

Fundacja Res Publica im. H. Krzeczковского
Gałczyńskiego 5, 00-362 Warsaw, Poland 0048 22 692 47 84, fundacja@res.publica.pl

ORDERS AND INQUIRIES:

contact@visegradinsight.eu

WEBPAGE:

www.visegradinsight.eu

ON THE COVER:

Photo by Gerald Neugschwandtner

We kindly thank interns working for this issue: Gertrude Gecaite, Mateusz Kuryła and Emilia Zareba

Visegrad Insight is published by Res Publica Foundation with the kind support of the International Visegrad Fund. The magazine maintains full editorial independence and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily have to reflect or represent official position of the International Visegrad Fund, the Visegrad Group or the publisher.

•
• Visegrad Fund
•



Photo: Vladislav Musienko



EUROPE

MAIDAN, MIGRANTS AND DEMOCRACY

- 10 Bankers, hipsters, and housewives: a revolution of common people
Oksana Forostyna
- 16 Labor migration as an invisible but strong economic issue. Commentary
Martin Ehl
- 18 Ukrainian migrants in the Czech Republic
Yana Leonityeva
- 22 Report: Forecasting immigration into the V4
Marta Jaroszewicz, Wadim Strielkowski
- 25 Migration policies towards third-country nationals
Mateusz Podgórski
- 29 Diaspora oriented organization in the V4
Magdalena Mazur
- 33 European commuters
Matteo Tacconi
- 36 Sticky issue or election-clincher?
Matthew Shearman
- 40 Freedom of movement and cross-border migration. Recent debates on migration in Europe
Jędrzej Burszta
- 42 New Europeans
Gertruda Gecaite

INTERVIEW

POPULATION FLOWS IN THE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

- 46 Cherry picking for a hungry Europe. Interview with Attila Meleg
Máté Zombory

INTELLIGENT MIND

IN DEFENSE OF DECADENT EUROPE

- 50 In Defense of Decadent Europe
Ivan Krastev
- 52 Tolerance requires competitiveness
Hywel Ceri Jones

COMMUNITIES

COEXISTENCE

- 56 "The village will never be the same again." Coexistence in northern Hungary
Cecília Kovai

ECONOMY AND BUSINESS

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

- 60 Mobility is an opportunity. Interview with Eduard Palíšek, CEO of Siemens Czech Republic
Pavla Francová
- 64 No drain, no gain
Maciej Kuziemski

BANKERS, HIPSTERS, AND HOUSEWIVES
A REVOLUTION OF COMMON PEOPLE
Oksana Forostyna
A FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT OF HOW TO OUST A DICTATOR IN 93 DAYS
PAGE 10

STICKY ISSUE
OR ELECTION-CLINCHER?
Matthew Shearman
Although European elections in the UK tend to be fought on domestic issues, V4 migrants will find themselves at the center of a fierce debate in May 2014.
PAGE 36

CHALLENGERS

NEW EUROPE 100

- 68 Tech startups of New Europe
Kornel Koronowski

ANALYSIS

ENEMIES OF DEMOCRACY

- 70 What people think of democracy
Radosław Markowski
- 76 When the party is over
Dominika Kasprowicz
- 79 Normative Poles meet masculine Slovaks
Piotr Żakowiecki

VISEGRAD ABROAD

RETREAT FROM THE EAST

- 82 A fresh look at the East
Bruno Lété
- 86 Would you call the Eastern Partnership a failed project? Interview with Matthew Bryza
by Wojciech Przybylski
- 89 The end of the Neighborhood
Spasimir Domaradzki

BOOKS

DELUGE OF BOOKS

- 92 A deluge of books
Katarína Kucbelová
- 94 We know that we read but we don't know what we read
Petr Minarik
- 95 Text dumping. Interview with Geza Morcsányi
Lila Proics
- 97 All that glitters is not gold
Przemysław Witkowski
- 98 Reviews by Katarzyna Dudzic-Grabińska, Jan Rejžek, Michal Jareš, Ivana Taranenkova, Magdalena Malińska, Judit Görözd, Csaba Pléh, Renáta Deák

ARTS / LOOKING BACK

ENTRY LEVEL

- 106 The joys of obedience. *Papers, Please*
Piotr Sterczewski
- 110 The Vietnamese in Poland
Ewelina Chwiejda
- 112 Where stuffed sharks don't live: On the Czech artistic puddle and its fish
Marek Sečkař

ESSAY

THE LEGENDARY WEST

- 118 The Legendary West
János Házy

CHERRY PICKING FOR A HUNGRY EUROPE
INTERVIEW WITH ATTILA MELEGH, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT CORVINUS UNIVERSITY
by Máté Zombory
PAGE 46

IN DEFENSE OF DECADENT EUROPE
Ivan Krastev
PAGE 50

WHERE STUFFED SHARKS DON'T LIVE
Marek Sečkař On the Czech artistic puddle and its fish
PAGE 112

MAIDAN MIGRANTS *and* DEMOCRACY



WOJCIECH PRZYBYLSKI
Editor-in-chief

The 2015 EU parliamentary elections will coincide with the no less significant Ukrainian elections to appoint new authorities in Kyiv and to legitimize a new European path for what remains the largest country on the continent. While most of the recent debate has been understandably overshadowed by the political cannibalism of Vladimir Putin, there are three serious questions that should not be overlooked in continental affairs.

Understanding the pro-European revolution

THIS ISSUE OF VI PRESENTS A SERIOUS HELPING OF FOCUSED ANALYSIS AND OPINION ON THREE MAJOR TOPICS: UNDERSTANDING THE UKRAINIAN MAIDAN MOVEMENT, DEBATES ON MIGRATION, AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS DEMOCRACY IN EUROPE

By the end of 2013, we were all too comfortable watching videos of people committed to the European way of life to the point of self-sacrifice. Their voices have been heard far and wide, despite Moscow's efforts to discredit Ukraine as a radical and anti-democratic nation. Public opinion in the West has already been disillusioned by the overambitious and discombobulated crowds of *indignados* and Occupy Wall Street protesters, and above all frightened by the fatal failures of the North African revolutions.

Now, we may see enthusiasm for democracy revived by Euro-maidan, which, contrary to those other popular revolts, has been immensely successful and may renew trust in people's ability to improve politics in the 21st century. The first questions we pose, therefore, is how much do we know about what happened on the squares of Kyiv? Who were the people who stood there and how can their experience bring about positive change?

Most of Ukraine's people – who number about 45 million – harbor European ambitions. Their determination to overthrow the post-Soviet culture of corruption represented by Viktor Yanukovyc and to modernize by following the European example is remarkable. At the same time, it brought to a head several serious issues that have been challenging the

official motto of Brussels: "united in diversity." Among those is the issue of migration. With closer economic ties, which is the obvious outcome of the Ukrainian revolution, an increased flow of people will follow, and migrants in Europe, unlike elsewhere in the world, have for quite some time been considered a potential threat, rather than an obvious opportunity.

The simplest fundamental achievement

IS EUROPE REALLY UNITED IN DIVERSITY? POLITICAL PLATFORMS BASED ON MIGRATION AHEAD OF THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS ATTEST TO THE CONTRARY

There are several shades of gray in European discourse on migrants. Europeans demonstrate different, often contradictory attitudes toward foreigners who aspire to settle down and earn their living among them. One such recent example was the French move to return a number of Roma migrants to Central Europe in 2010. That decision, which was clearly motivated by Nicolas Sarkozy's need to satisfy the populist demands of his constituency, did not help him win office two years later.

The debate on migrants took a turn for the compassionate after the Lampedusa tragedy in 2013, but have we not witnessed so many more such smaller-scale tragedies that they cumulatively make the migrant death toll too large to accept without hypocrisy? Finally, with the possibility of war next door, the issue of a just and effective migration policy is a most urgent one.

Nevertheless, several national parties running for seats in Brussels and Strasbourg continue to use anti-migrant rhetoric as their principal weapon, first against Muslims, and now against economic migrants from Central and Eastern Europe. The UK Independence Party recently released its poster campaign based on this issue and continues to run for European office on a platform that goes against the shared core EU policy of freedom of movement, hand in hand with several other grotesque political parties across the continent.

At first the argument may seem rational – more migrants mean less jobs – but various studies have already demonstrated that the opposite is the case. Pan-European freedom of movement is the simplest and greatest achievement of post-war Europe; public opinion in Visegrad countries can definitely testify to that. So isn't this a double standards?

In spite of extensive analysis and projections, some of which is presented in this issue, there is a lack of political will for liberalization of visa regimes. We continue to prepare domestic institutions for greater migration flows that may also reinvigorate the troubled economy, but Eurostat data clearly demonstrate that V4 remains balanced around zero when it comes to the rate of net migration. There is little talk about and even less action being taken in this matter.

Eastern and Southern neighbors

WE WOULD LIKE TO BRING READERS' ATTENTION TO THE FOCAL POINT OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CHALLENGES THAT LIE AHEAD FOR THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP AND THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBORHOOD POLICY

In democracies, new elections bring about new policies. Will this be the case for Europe in 2014? Which issues will be addressed by the new EU parliament and the newly appointed commission? Will Brussels and individual country capitals devote some energy to much-needed improvements in the Neighborhood Policy?

While Moscow's foreign policy benefits from the recent surge of nationalist parties across the EU, Europe should rethink its attitude toward its Eastern neighbors and aim to reform and integrate a common foreign policy. Despite all the odds, the Eastern Partnership has worked, but the results have been unexpected; today's policy must both adapt and demonstrate much more forward-thinking than before.

The policy toward the East should not only be rethought as a tool for managing a potential crisis situation in the post-Soviet space, but foremost as a thorough strategy aimed at bolstering relations with a troubled part of the world, integrating current achievements, and reforming failed ideas. This encompasses the issue of migration, but it cannot be successful without serious reconsideration of the European attitude toward two, often contradictory, factors: short-term economic output and long-term political strategy.

BANKERS, HIPSTERS, AND HOUSEWIVES A REVOLUTION OF COMMON PEOPLE

A FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT

OF HOW TO OUST A DICTATOR

IN 93 DAYS



Vladyslav Musilenko

It took three months for Ukrainians to overcome their fear and illusions of the disgusting criminal Ukrainian regime and push the world toward a reality check. Once they reached their tipping point, the world saw a large-scale rebellion carried out by the people, many of whom had never been involved in protests before, and for whom the process of ousting Yanukovich was intense enough to override social and political barriers. However, life won't go back to normal; the ongoing occupation of Crimea and other cities in Eastern Ukraine ensures that the people are kept on high alert.

OKSANA FOROSTYNA

On a sunny morning on 18 February, thousands of people left Maidan and went up Instytutska Street toward the Ukrainian parliament, the Rada. Instytutska had been cut off by two barricades; in fact, the upper barricade was the border between two worlds, the hub of the rebellion on Maidan and the government area, also known as the Pechersk Hills. The entrance was extremely narrow, about two meters wide, so people had to wait in line to get in.

My friends and I knew, although we didn't say it out loud, that the idea was a bad one: unlike Maidan, with its many exits to the city, fortified and controlled by protesters, here on the government hill and the other streets further up, we were squeezed between vacant office and apartment buildings, and controlled by the riot police – the Berkut. In other words, the chances of escape were poor.

However, people went on enjoying each other's company, the sun, and the flags. First, came companies (*sotnias*) of Maidan paramilitary units, then Samooborona (Self-defense of Maidan), then activists. The line at the barricade applauded a guy

playing the bagpipes. This was just an episode, one of thousands, demonstrating the fantastic mix of senses that made up the Ukrainian revolution: national and party flags, EU flags, a guy playing Beethoven's "Ode to Joy," men and women in second-hand British and German camouflage with wooden shields sporting classic quotes or slogans, and "V" signs, presumably inspired by "V for Vendetta."

In a few hours, at least ten people were killed. The narrow entrance in the barricade became a trap; people were beaten by *titushki* (paid thugs) and riot police while trying to escape. Hundreds were injured that day, and that was just the beginning of two days of bloodshed.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

That night Maidan was attacked, and the police pressed forward, nearly as far as the now-famous stage. The Berkut set the Trade Union building on fire, Maidan's headquarters since December. The death toll is still not clear ▶1; at least two burned bodies were found. The fire could not be extinguished, as the Berkut had cut off the water supply.

As it would appear later, this was the only part of the operation that police and the SBU (the Security Service of Ukraine) were prepared to de-

1 ▶ There are 110 identified victims, with another 16 police officers who were killed on duty during the conflict. However, the total death toll has not yet been confirmed.



Photo: Vladyslav Mishchenko

ploy. Fortunately, they did not achieve their goal of turning Maidan into a bloodbath. Either they underestimated the resistance of Maidan and Kyiv in general, or some municipal executives who were ordered to cut off the water supply and electricity, acted as saboteurs, or something else altogether prevented a full scale tragedy; in any case, Maidan stood the next day, and the day after that. On Thursday morning, 20 February, the riot police retreated somewhat and some protesters crossed the front line. Then, snipers began shooting. That morning, most of the Nebesna Sotnia, “Heaven’s Company,” died, and that was the beginning of Yanukovich’s end.

Why did people go to parliament on Tuesday morning? Some politicians and pundits would later say that it was a great mistake to leave the safe perimeter of Maidan. Nevertheless, that day in the column it was not only Self-defense who wore protective gear, and we entertained ourselves by guessing who the people marching next to us were: “I bet this one is at least a department head,” “That, I’m sure, is a CEO,” and “I bet that one on the left is in marketing!”

This was both usual and unusual. During the clashes in mid-January, we got used to seeing people with baseball bats and crowbars in the sushi restaurants and pricey pubs on Maidan and in the nearby

streets, and guys exchanging expensive clothes for protective gear next to their 100,000-dollar cars. Even on the first night, the waiters and waitresses were no longer nervous, as if it were the most normal thing on earth to see guys in masks at the table. The Ukrainian protests belonged to all classes and were a mix of multiple realities; a combination of 19th-century national revolution and an Occupy protest, a rebellion of repressed businessmen, an anarchist commune, and a warrior camp. Maidan became home to both Cossacks in traditional costumes and an IT tent (the head of the Ukrainian office of Microsoft took a vacation to stay on Maidan), a place for medieval weapons such as a catapult and a ram, and almost non-stop online broadcasting, tweeting, and streaming. The first catapult on Hrushevsky Street, the location of the January clashes, was constructed from drawings found on the Internet and uploaded to a smartphone right next to the front line. The frame holding the screen that activists installed in front of the police cordon to ruin the information blockade by providing TV-news was made by joiners from the Carpathians. Maidan was an area in which all could work and fight together, hipsters and farmers, anarchists and bankers, the poor and the wealthy. The first serious clashes in mid-January happened when football fans and ultras joined the protest. The fans of

competitive football clubs concluded an armistice during the revolutionary period. Ukraine might be the only country in Europe in which people praised ultras for defending them from the police.

FROM “STUDENT MAIDAN” TO AUTOMAIDAN

However, this didn’t all happen from the beginning. During the first days of November, Maidan was relatively small, just a few thousand Kyiv professionals and students, mobilized mainly by a Facebook post, most of whom knew each other from previous demonstrations and actions; four years of Yanukovich leading the cabinet with unprecedented corruption and injustice were not easy. Before the brutal beating on 30 November, students from other cities came (which may explain why this first Maidan was called “Student Maidan”), and the night of the beating became part of the Ukrainian collective memory, like a sort of Childermas.

The morning straight after that night, and the next day, Maidan changed: people who had never been politically active before, came to Maidan. It was not about signing the agreement with the EU, it was about being against the regime and its brutality.

Many new initiatives started at the beginning of the new big Maidan, such as AutoMaidan ², mostly represented by Kyiv’s middle class business community and professionals. While Samooborona remained mostly within the Maidan perimeter to defend the barricades, AutoMaidan worked throughout the city and beyond, providing Maidan with firewood, food, and other essentials, patrolling the streets, and protesting near luxury estates belonging to Yanukovich and other authorities in the Kyiv suburbs. AutoMaidan’s race to Mezhyhirya, Yanukovich’s residence, was precisely recorded by the police, every vehicle registered and recorded on a list. Many cars from that list would be burned; the owners of others lost their driver’s licenses in kangaroo courts, in which no effort was made to pretend that the cases were legitimate. This happened to one of the leaders of AutoMaidan, who called for a strike near the Rada on 19 January; he had to flee quickly. Another leader, Dmytro Bulatov, was kidnapped and tortured. Earlier, Ihor Lutsenko, the deputy commandant of Maidan and a well-known activist, was also kidnapped and tortured, and was surprisingly asked the same question: who was providing financial support for AutoMaidan? This is symptomatic: the criminals, obviously affiliated with the police and the regime, had no idea what the Ukrainian middle-class was or how audacious and capable it was in those days.

AutoMaidan is important in terms of the social structure of the revolution and proof that it was not a Western Ukrainian project. During the Orange Revolution in 2004, people from all regions took part and Kyiv held up the rear. This time, Kyiv’s young bourgeoisie were the active

participants and the vanguard. They not only had cars (and were prepared to forfeit them) and enough money to spend on petrol, but knew the city very well. Local patriotism also mattered: after Yanukovich came to power, all cabinets and positions that mattered, especially in security, were occupied by people from the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, the most loyal to Yanukovich. In Kyiv and other cities, this was perceived as occupation, and urban folklore, far from being politically correct, compared “Donetsky” with the Nazi occupation during the Second World War. When titushki began to come to Kyiv, the courage with which people secured the streets was probably a reflection of the last four years of bitterness at living under occupation.

MAIDAN ERUPTS

Back to the morning of 18 February: people remained on the Pechersk Hills even after the first minor clashes turned into serious fighting, even after snipers began to shoot from the rooftops. Police threw stun grenades into the crowd. The crossroads of Instytutska and Shovkovychna, one of the streets leading to the parliament, at the time blocked by trucks and a police cordon, is in fact narrow, making it much harder to maneuver than during previous clashes on Hrushevsky Street and Evropeyska Square. But people stood their ground. From time to time they helped paramedics to take away some of the injured and shell-shocked – and they stood their ground.

This is what Yanukovich and his allies could not understand. They themselves fell victim to their own propaganda and self-isolation; they missed the point of no return, the point at which people were not afraid any more. First, it was just that the harder the regime pushed, the harder the response was. When Maidan was attacked in December 2013, thousands came in the middle of the night. Those who could not take a taxi or carpool with friends and acquaintances came on foot. However, after the 16 January “dictatorship laws,” ³ everything changed profoundly: it was no longer a non-violent protest. According to the “dictatorship laws,” pushed through parliament by a disgusting breach of procedure and thus the law, all forms of protest Maidan had used before were prohibited. For instance, the provision of up to fifteen days in jail for wearing a mask, a helmet, or “other means of concealing or protecting the face or the head” was met by large-scale protest in just two days: people put kitchen utensils – pots, basins, and colanders – on their heads; and, of course, helmets. As one of the dictatorship laws obliged NGOs that accept financial support from foreign institutions to register as “foreign agents” and to pay additional taxes, all of the social networks were full of statements such as: “I am a foreign agent!” People chose to break the absurd laws

² AutoMaidan is a movement made up mainly of drivers who protected the protest camps and blockaded the streets. It organized a car procession on 29 December 2013 to the President Yanukovich’s residence in Mezhyhirya to voice their protests at his refusal to sign the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement in December 2013.

³ The Ukrainian “dictatorship laws” are a group of ten laws that were passed by Ukraine’s parliament on 16 January 2014. The laws effectively restrict the freedom of speech and the freedom of assembly.

deliberately instead of hiding at home, waiting for further repression.

If you can be arrested for wearing a hard hat or writing a Facebook post, why shouldn't you throw a Molotov cocktail or a cobblestone? As the risk of large-scale repressions became real, Maidan erupted.

After a few weeks of violent clashes that saw four activists shot, hundreds injured, and dozens arrested, the terror of thugs under police cover, kidnapping and torture, the opposition leaders didn't have anything to show for their negotiations with Yanukovich, other than that most of the "dictatorship laws" were revoked and most activists discharged (although not absolved). Instead, Yanukovich demanded that the buildings on Maidan and Khreshchatyk be abandoned. In fact, Yanukovich acted just like a terrorist: creating threats, taking hostages, and then making demands. All this meant that the protesters had to withdraw to a position that was even weaker than before 16 January.

On Tuesday morning, people went to parliament not only in protest against the regime; they also came for the opposition. They came to support those few MPs they trusted, and to put pressure on those who were not firm enough. They came not just to protest, but also to block parliament if it would not vote to change the constitution to its previous version, one with reduced presidential powers. As the Rada speaker refused to put it on the agenda, the tires in front of the police cordon on Hrushevsky Street were again set on fire. The black smoke was a signal to the MPs inside parliament: "We are here and we will not accept a compromise."

Then came a day of massacre, and a night when Maidan was almost overtaken, with the streets full of thugs; and the morning, with the Trade Union building still glowing, and Maidan still under attack. The metro was closed for the first time since its construction. But Khreshchatyk was full of people, thousands again. Almost everyone had at least one package with food and hot drinks. Many seemed to be there for the first time, not just for a Sunday meeting, but for a serious matter.

Those who didn't come to feed the mostly homeless Maidan residents came to make Molotovs and to pull up the cobblestones. Many people came from other cities despite numerous roadblocks. This was the people of Kyiv taking their beloved city apart to protect it.

On one of the plinths of the granite façade was a cobblestone, just at arm's length. A guy in a black mask, armed with a stick, used it to secure a new garbage bag: Maidan needed more rubbish bins.

SHURA'S STORY

That Tuesday night, Shura Ryazanceva, an AutoMaidan activist, dragged out an injured protestor on Instytutska. She had been just about to leave the country the next morning, but decided to come to

the city and join the paramedics. When she tried to pull the injured man from the firing line, someone picked him up and covered them both with his shield. They chatted on their way back to the firing line from hospital; the next morning he was dead: shot by a sniper on Instytutska.

Shura is from Yalta, Crimea. Her father was a military pilot and she was brought up in a military family ethos. Shura graduated from the National Academy for Internal Affairs and worked briefly as a crime investigator for the police. "Here I do almost the same as I once did as an investigator," she says.

After what happened during the last days of the Yanukovich regime, Shura got a tattoo on her hand: "Nebesna Sotnia. 18.02.-20.02." This tattoo made the Berkut furious; the same Berkut who ran away from Kyiv after Maidan had won and who she would meet again at the checkpoint in Crimea a few weeks later, after the Russian invasion. Shura and four other activists and journalists were kidnapped and detained at the Russian naval base. Previously, they had been beaten, forced to kneel, and their hands tied. The Berkut cut Shura's hair and threatened to cut her tattooed arm. "The interrogators at the naval base thought we were spies; they were fairly rational, but still naïve, and kept asking the hostages who was financing them; the same questions were asked of the other kidnapped activists – Ihor Lutsenko and Dmytro Bulatov."

Meanwhile, many people in the city of three million panicked, buying out groceries and fuel, and emptying the ATMs. This was actually the first time the panic had become serious. During the winter, any trace of revolution was barely visible, even just one metro stop from Maidan.

Later that day, when someone announced several times that a grenade needed to be dismantled just a few meters away, those on Maidan didn't even bother – something had changed profoundly. Although the crowd at Maidan had earlier demonstrated that it was in fact a revolution of rational people – if people started to run in fear and cause panic, others stopped them quickly – Maidan's behavior on Thursday was different.

"Everything has changed," said Shura, preparing messages of support for Ukrainian soldiers in Crimea in the AutoMaidan headquarters. With her many tattoos, she looks more like a rock-star; before Maidan she had been working as a stylist for the most popular comedy show on Ukrainian TV. "My old job seems so irrelevant after everything that has happened."

When the dead bodies were brought from Instytutska to Maidan on Thursday morning, few people cried. In the new reality of the destroyed Maidan, it was full of Molotovs, the Trade Union building still burned, the Central Post office and some shops had been turned into hospitals, ten dead bodies lay bleeding in front of the Kozatsky Hotel, McDonald's, and the tram stop. In a tent



that had been a café just a few days earlier and had recently been turned into an aid post, some other injured people lay dying. A woman was crying and telling everyone that there was a sniper on the roof of Kozatsky. No one took her seriously. The people on stage prevented everyone from staying within the perimeter of Maidan. Snipers were presumably shooting from the roof of the highest point above Maidan – the Stalinist-style building of the Ukraine Hotel. Minor clashes with titushki had been reported from the other sides of Maidan. For a few hours, it seemed safer on Maidan than away from it.

THE REVOLUTION CONTINUES

AutoMaidan's first visit to Yanukovich's estate in December 2013 was a challenge, and provoked the subsequent acts of repression against the activists. The second time they went to Mezhyhirya was after Yanukovich had fled, to provide security for the tourist attraction ▶4. Thousands came along on that Saturday morning, 22 February, not only journalists and activists, but also families with children. Perhaps some of these visitors had not taken an active part at Maidan; nevertheless, it was important for them to see the den of the tyrant, empty.

"Look, we really ruined Putin's morning," I said to my friend. "Can you imagine, the whole world sees us walking around the most protected

estate in this country, and the whole world understands that other dictators might be next."

A couple of hours later we left Mezhyhirya, still wearing our already useless flak jackets. We paused in front of the TV screen at the petrol station in Gostomel, as did the staff of the fast food café and the cashier. The Ukrainian Parliament had just voted to reject Yanukovich. We all sang the national anthem along with the TV, just standing there, at the petrol station.

The revolution may not have been over, but we really did ruin Putin's morning. The following day, turmoil began in Sevastopol, and within four days Russian forces had seized the government buildings in Crimea.

With the continued violation of Crimea and the wounds of the events on Maidan still fresh in the minds of Ukrainian people, how will the developing conflict with Russia be played out over the next few months?

The author is a Ukrainian journalist, executive editor of the *Krytyka* journal based in Kyiv.

▶4 After President Viktor Yanukovich fled Kyiv on 21 February 2014, the Ukrainian Parliament adopted a resolution on the transfer of the Mezhyhirya residence into state ownership. Thousands of Ukrainians visited this luxurious palace once it was open to the general public on 22 February

Labor migration: an invisible but strong economic issue

COMMENTARY

MARTIN EHL

Two generations of Central European citizens lived in an artificially isolated environment until 1989. Following the mass shift in whole nations during the Second World War and immediately after it, there was no possibility for the average citizens of the countries between Germany and Russia to seek better work opportunities elsewhere. There were many emigration waves in the wake of different uprisings against communist rule, but there was no opportunity to seek a better life without forever saying goodbye to one's homeland. It was a one-way street. But farther back in history, thousands of Poles, Slovaks, and Czechs – not to mention the different settlements inside the former Austro-Hungarian empire territory – went to North and South America. Such emigration was largely due to economic necessity rather than political reasons. This natural inflow and outflow ended with the raising of the Iron Curtain.

The 1989 changeover brought a new, double experience with migration. With the change promoted by the slogan “open society” and acceptance into the European Union, societies that had been closed for the last forty years started to open in many different ways; this included producing migrants as well as receiving them. The new existence of a Ukrainian minority in the Czech Republic and Poland, massive Slovak outflow to the Czech Republic, the return of thou-

sands of ethnic Hungarians to Hungary from Serbia, Romania, and Ukraine – not to mention the Vietnamese minority in the Czech Republic and the Chinese minority in Hungary – are completely new phenomena with deep economic consequences, in addition to the political and social ones. Among the OECD countries, the Visegrad Four are among the countries with the lowest share of foreign-born populations, falling under the 5% threshold. At the top of the four is the Czech Republic, where rules are being tightened, especially for economic immigrants.

Attitudes toward the old emigrants of Central Europe changed after the fall of communism. The Baltic states and Poland saw their old communities overseas as a natural part of their nations that helped preserve tradition, language, the spirit of freedom, and the old business spirit during communism. Countries such as the Czech Republic and Hungary rather saw emigrant communities as a danger to the local elites that emerged from the communist transition, and thus there was no inflow of real businessmen with Western experience as there was in Poland, where the Solaris bus factory is a prime example of an emigrant family setting up business back in Poland.

Central Europe has continued its historical tradition of producing economic emigration in the last decade, driven in particular by EU membership and based on one of the four basic freedoms: to seek work elsewhere within the EU – with ex-

ceptions, of course, such as Germany, which allowed entry to its labor market at the latest possible deadline. Poles have created strong minorities in the UK and Ireland and strengthened an old one in Germany. About two million Poles live and work outside their homeland, according to the estimates of the Polish Central Statistical Office. Following the decline of the crisis, there has again been a rise in emigration. According to an OECD study, at the end of 2012, unemployment in Poland reached more than 10% (30% among the young), and emigration increased again. In 2012 about 5.2% of the population was abroad, while in 2010 it was about 3%. For comparison, there were 56,300 temporary immigrants in Poland in 2011.

Tens of thousands of Slovaks have sought work in the Czech Republic over the last few decades. According to the OECD, there was substantial drop in immigration in 2011 (-25% in comparison with 2010) and emigration (-26% in 2010). There were about 130,000 Slovaks working abroad in 2010, and a year later there were 116,000.

Quite recently, there has been a fresh wave of – mainly young and well-educated – Hungarians seeking work in Austria, Germany, the UK, and other EU member countries. Their motivation is probably a combination of economic and political reasons, although there is a lack of data and studies in this area. Some estimates speak of half a million Hungarians working permanently outside the country. Official emigration statistics are unavailable. According to the OECD, an estimated 200,000 Hungarians worked abroad in 2011, with a significant increase in 2012. Labor emigration in particular involves youth and the health sector. For example, 2,000 physicians requested professional certificates required for their employment abroad in 2011.

The Hungarian example shows there are special sectors endangered by labor migration. The Hungarian government has introduced restrictions for medical students – they have to pay for their studies in case they leave immediately after school. The Romanian medical system is collapsing because doctors and nurses are leaving the country. This has been widely described in the English-speaking press and evokes similarities with all the Visegrad countries, where young specialists in particular are moving westward. The author of this text has had personal

experience with a highly specialized Czech medical doctor who returned after ten years' practice in the UK to a top Czech medical facility, and then left after a few years, tired of the quasi-reformist wrangling of politicians, the low salary, high bureaucratic burden, and the lack of a broader perspective.

There is a real danger that there will be a general shortage of specialists as Europe ages and the weakest points in the transformation of post-communist states – primarily the poor quality of public institutions – are pointed out. Of course, medical doctors can more easily find work abroad than teachers, for example. When a young, relatively well-educated teacher, faces a lack of prospects, that young teacher goes to clean houses in London with the notion that it could be the start of a new life in a different country and environment. Newcomers such as Vietnamese, Ukrainians, and Slovaks are not filling these specialized ranks, but are mainly enlarging the already existent cohort of cheap labor, which to a great extent forms the Central European workshop for German industry.

The economic crisis of recent years has influenced migration in the region quite significantly. The OECD's *International Migration Outlook 2013*, produced last autumn, shows that the crisis has slowed migration among OECD countries. In 2011 (the latest numbers), immigration in the context of free movement in Europe rebounded by 15% after a decline of almost 40% during the crisis (2007-2010). Poland and Romania are, after China, the top two countries of origin due to increased intra-EU mobility. According to this OECD report, people are still leaving even though immigrants are more affected by rising unemployment. The political consequence in Western Europe is clear: there is now a growing anti-immigration wave in Western Europe, one well-exploited by populist parties, which has much more to do with domestic policies than with situation of emigrants themselves.

The Baltic states, Poland, and Slovakia have sent more of their labor force – in relation to its active labor force – abroad than the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovenia, with Lithuania topping the race with 8% of its labor force out of country three years after EU accession.

In her dissertation on labor migration in CEE countries at Central

European University in Budapest in 2011 (“From Job Search to Skill Search: Political Economy of Labor Migration in Central and Eastern Europe”), Lucie Kureková takes a thorough look at the economic reasons for migration from the region. One of her conclusions is not surprising: people from less generous social systems – such as the Polish or Slovak system – emigrate more than people from more generous social systems – such as the Czech or Hungarian system. Another of her conclusions may be surprising to politicians but not their voters: in addition to relative or absolute wage levels, the institutional set-up of the labor market also plays a crucial role in the decision to migrate or not.

The process of transition has created structural insecurity for entire groups of citizens. Many, upon finding themselves in desperate situations of struggling public funds and a lack of coherent labor policy, decide to resolve the situation themselves. This is physically visible in many Eastern regions such as Prešov, Slovakia, or Białystok, Poland, where whole generations have been depleted by emigration and incoming money, while, on the other side, there is the creation of new socio-economic groups whose members build big houses and artificially drive consumption only to show locals that emigrants live better. So far, there is no structural sign that emigrants are returning en-masse to create new businesses and new jobs.

Despite the many economic implications, we are continually brought back to political questions, especially with regard to the quality of domestic institutions after the transformation and ten years of EU membership. Domestic brain drain and demographic damage are another side of the issue, accompanied by an unwelcoming attitude to new immigrants from even poorer and worse-governed countries. These issues are highly political in host countries in Western Europe, where emigration is contributing to tension at a time of record high unemployment, and in turn feeding rising support for populist and eurosceptic parties. Migration in Central Europe is a far-reaching matter thus far only addressed poorly by politicians, but with long-term implications for each of the states and societies involved.

The author is the chief international editor of the Czech daily *Hospodářské noviny*.

UKRAINIAN MIGRANTS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

YANA LEONTIYEVA

Ukrainian immigration to the Czech lands has a long history that some experts date back to the Middle Ages. Labor migrants from Halych and Bukovyna came for seasonal work to the Czech and Moravian lands (Zilynskyj 1995) in the 14th century. At the turn of the 19th century, Ukrainian intellectuals who had abandoned their native country for political reasons were drawn primarily to Prague and other big cities within the Austrian part of the Habsburg Empire. During the first decades of the 20th century, the Ukrainian diaspora, which was organized under several associations of different aims and scopes, was very fruitful in its educational and academic activities (including publishing a number of textbooks, dictionaries, and encyclopedias, and establishing a university and the Higher Pedagogical Institute). Unfortunately, the subsequent Nazi and Soviet occupations of Czechoslovakia led to the forced closing down of Ukrainian associations and the majority of Ukrainian immigrants were assimilated into the majority population (Zilynskyj and Kočík 2001). Many Ukrainians in the Transcarpathian region, which has an especially long history of immigration, continued to have a close connection to the Czech lands, in many cases based on larger fam-

ily ties. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the Czech lands experienced a new extensive wave of predominantly economic migrants from Ukraine. The “older” generation of immigrants maintain their civic activities in a more traditional way and – at the turn of the century – were clearly dis-

SUMMARY

- Ukrainians are the largest migration community in the Czech Republic.
- For many years Ukrainian migration was described as temporary labor migration dominated by men; however, today more than half of Ukrainian nationals are settled (hold permanent residence permits) and almost half are women.
- Ukrainian immigrants in the Czech Republic are clustered mainly at the bottom rungs of the labor market.
- Economic stagnation has had a dramatic effect on the share of employed Ukrainians, particularly those employed in jobs that do not require higher education.

tancing themselves from “new economic” immigrants. Over the last decade these new immigrants have become more settled and civically engaged, and there has also been a gradual change in the activities of traditional Ukrainian NGOs aimed at the new wave of immigrants.

The number of Ukrainians in the Czech Republic has grown rapidly in the last twenty years. Starting with less than 10,000 in the early 1990s, the official number of Ukrainian citizens who reside in the Czech Republic today has risen to over 100,000. Ukrainians are the largest migrant community in the Czech Republic: they constitute about 25% of all migrants and about 40% of immigrants from countries outside the European Union. The total number of Ukrainian citizens registered by the end of December 2013 was 105,239 (MoI 2013), which represents a slight drop-off from the end of 2008, when the number of Ukrainians residing in the country was about 132,000 (CZSO 2013).

In addition to the official numbers, an irregular component of Ukrainians immigration is worth mentioning. According to official statistics, the annual number of Ukrainian citizens who cross the border without valid documents is very small. However, most researchers and experts agree that Ukrainians (as well as many other immigrants groups) “fell into illegality” in the Czech Republic (Drbohlav and Lachmanová 2008), mostly as a result of a rigid migration policy, especially with regard to the prolongation of work and residence permits. This may be all the more true in times of economic recession, as the Czech state put more restrictions on employment of third country nationals. According to estimates, the number of irregular immigrants in the Czech Republic could be as high as the number of officially registered immigrants (Drbohlav et al. 2010), with estimates spanning between 50,000 and 150,000 people (Nekorjak 2007).

Ukrainian migration to the Czech Republic is rather “young,” approximately nine in ten Ukrainian nationals residing in the Czech Republic are between 15 and 59 years of age. In the last decade, the share of women among Ukrainian migrants fluctuated between 40% and 45%, with a slight increase since 2010. However, stagnation of the immigrant inflow due to a changing approach toward newcomers has resulted in a significant increase in the share of permanent residence permit holders. The share of permanent residence permit holders among Ukrainians in 2000 was less than one-fifth; it was almost one-third in 2008 (CZSO 2013) and almost two thirds by the end of December 2013 (MoI 2013). Ukrainian female migration is more settled; the share of permanent residence permit holders is significantly higher

among female migrants (70% as compared to 52% among men, CZSO 2013).

For more than two decades, Ukrainian migration to the Czech Republic has been primarily economic in nature. Most of the Ukrainian immigrants are traditionally employed in the secondary labor market. By the end of 2011¹ the official record reported 68,650 economically active citizens from Ukraine, of whom almost half were self-employed with the other half being under a regular work contract. The nature of the economic activities of Ukrainian migrants has changed significantly over the last five years. Figure 1 illustrates the incredible drop-off in direct employment of Ukrainians (with an almost 60% drop-off from 2008 in 2011), which, however, did not coincide with the mass return of immigrants.

In order to understand this development, it is important to note that in 2008 the vast majority (91%) of employed Ukrainians did not have free access to the labor market and had to apply for work permits, which are mostly issued for a period of up to one year, and fixed to a given employer, position, and region. However, according to the official numbers, the economic recession did not have such a dramatic impact on the economic activities of Ukrainians (and the majority of other third-country nationals) not subjected to work permit regulations (holders of permanent residence permits, family members, students, etc.), or EU nationals employed in the Czech Republic. On the contrary, these groups exhibited a slight increase in numbers. Thus, the decline in direct employment of third-country nationals (TCN) cannot be explained purely by staff reductions and the bankruptcy of Czech companies, and seems strongly associated with the changing approach to work permit regulation.

At the very initial phase of the economic recession, the Czech state adopted a rather restrictive approach not only toward newcomers but also toward immigrants already in the country. Since the beginning of 2009, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) sent out several memorandums addressed to labor offices (LOs), aimed at facilitating the employed Czech citizens’ by means of the strict regulation of the employment of TCNs. First, the MoLSA rather vaguely appealed for “greater consideration” of a general decline in the demand for foreign labor within the Czech economy. In spite of a declining trend in direct employment of TCNs, at the beginning of

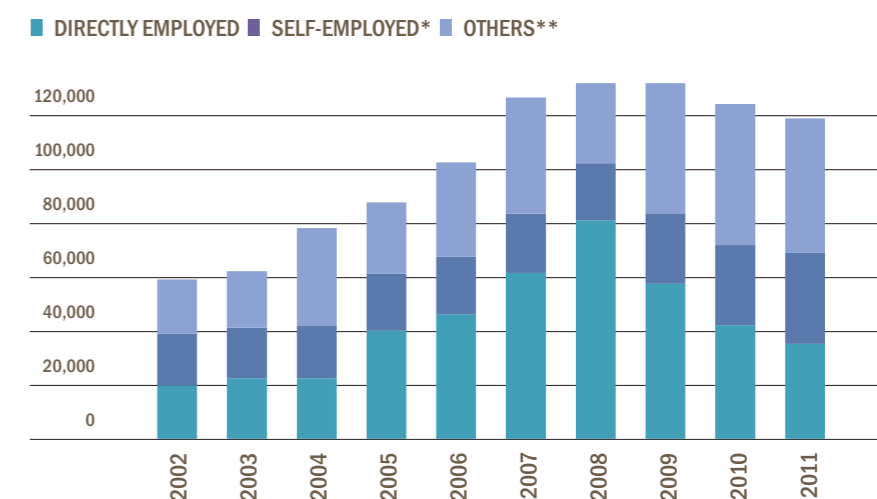
2012 MoLSA decided to instruct LOs to discontinue issuing work permits for positions for which employers do not request *Maturita* (General Certificate of Secondary Education – GCSE). In June 2012, following strong criticism from NGOs and Czech companies employing immigrants, MoLSA modified the aforementioned regulations and instructed LOs to prolong and issue work permits for unskilled professions for a shorter period of time: up to six months for professions with no GCSE requirements, up to one year for professions requiring a GCSE certificate, and up to two years for highly qualified professions with a university education requirement. However, the new memorandum insists on an official proof of qualification requirement for all applicants. In the middle of November 2013, MoLSA modified the regulations again, this time prolonging the maximum validity of the work permits for unskilled and semi-skilled profession up to twelve months. The regulations concerning qualified professions with university education remained the same; however the proof of qualification is now required only for new work permits and not for prolongation of valid permits.

The effectiveness of these measures in boosting the employment prospects of the domestic workforce is not entirely clear.

Statistics indicating whether Czech workers subsequently filled positions for which foreigners failed to get permits are not available. As mentioned earlier, the recession did not have such a dramatic impact on the total number of Ukrainians residing in the country. Given the dynamic of the Czech unemployment rate, it seems that rather than combating unemployment and exclusion, the measures taken by MoLSA and described above merely influenced the nature of Ukrainian labor migration.

Another important change illustrated in Figure 1 is the 60% growth in officially registered entrepreneurial activities of Ukrainian migrants since 2008. In order to understand the dynamic of the economic activities of TCNs in the Czech Republic, it is important to consider an important fact behind these official numbers: there are different forms of irregular economic activities carried out by immigrants. In addition to the employment of immigrants without valid residence permits and/or valid work permits, there is also the rather widespread phenomenon of employment hidden behind self-employment. These “bogus employment” practices, in the Czech context often called the “švarc system,” are often preferable not only to immigrants but also natives. This alternative

FIGURE 1. IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS ON THE REGISTERED ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF UKRAINIANS

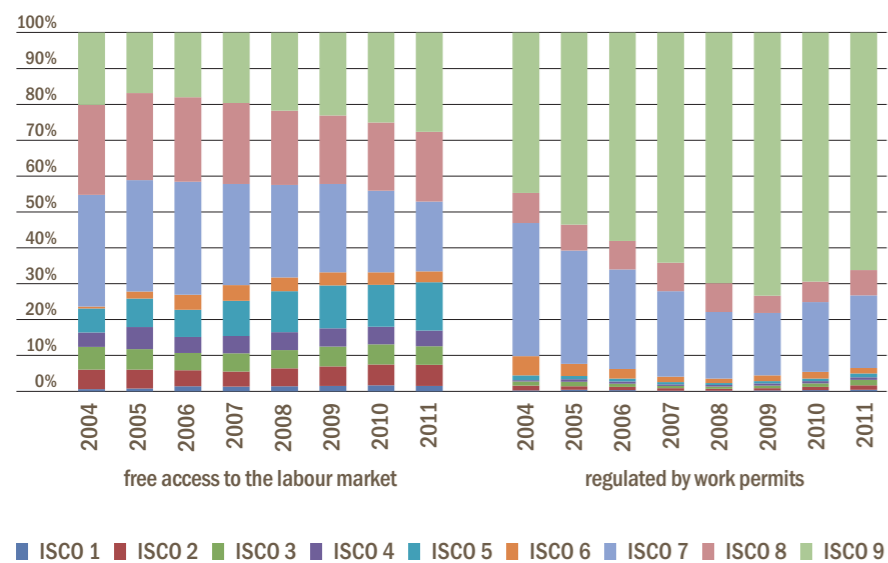


Source: CZSO 2013

* Data on self-employed is not complete, and includes only trade license holders; the number of partners and shareholders (without work permit) of companies is not available.

** Other migrants without registered economic activities (including children, family members, students, pensioners and other not employed).

FIGURE 2. IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS ON THE OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE OF EMPLOYED UKRAINIANS



Source: MoLSA 2011

employment strategy may be preferred by immigrants, as it seems a more convenient and secure way to obtain formal employment, especially for unqualified occupations such as cleaners, cashiers, welders, etc. There are no reliable data on how widespread the “Švarc system” is among Ukrainian immigrants; however, several studies suggest that it might be an important strategy among immigrants (Drbohlav 2008; Hofírek and Nekorjak 2009; Leontiyeva and Nečasová 2009; Drbohlav, et al. 2010; Čermáková, Schováňková, and Fiedlerová 2011). As mentioned above, strict regulations concerning employment in particular target low-skilled immigrants who are employed in professions that do not require a secondary education. Figure 2 provides an interesting comparison of the occupational structure of Ukrainian citizens who hold work permits and those who have free access to the labor market. The occupational structure of Ukrainians with free access to the labor market was rather stable between 2004 and 2011. During the same period, the employment of Ukrainians regulated by the state experienced rather dramatic changes. At times of economic boom the share of elementary occupations grew rapidly; it shrank significantly after 2009. Unfortunately, later data are not available at MoLSA; however, due to the regulations described above, one should expect a strong trend in occupational structure as a result of rather strict regulations of the

employment of semiskilled and unskilled migrants. As of the end of 2011, the vast majority of Ukrainians were employed in unskilled auxiliary work (58%), 20% in craft and related trade work, and only 5% in managerial or skilled jobs. Ukrainians are mostly employed in construction (44%), manufacturing (21%), wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles, personal, and household goods (8%), and transport storage and communication (6%) (CZSO 2013). Domestic work is still not very widespread among Ukrainian migrants, but it has become more relevant over the last decade. The involvement of migrants in care and domestic work is attracting the growing attention of Czech researchers, especially with regard to the rights of female immigrants engaged in domestic work – primarily cleaning and less frequently care. An interesting example is the campaign “Do you who is cleans your place?” initiated by a Czech NGO and aimed not only at supporting the rights of domestic workers but also raising awareness of the phenomenon among the native population. The social advertisement spot portrayed a Ukrainian teacher working as a cleaning lady, treated without respect by her employer. Unfortunately, there is neither hard data nor expert estimates of the number of Ukrainian immigrants (male or female) engaged in domestic work.

The educational level of Ukrainian immigrants is often a matter of speculation, as only limited data is available. Traditionally, Ukrainians in the Czech Republic are portrayed as well-educated but overqualified and underpaid (Drbohlav, Janská, and Šelepová 2001; Uherek and Plochová 2003; Drbohlav and Džúrová 2007; Drbohlav, et al. 2010; Ezzeddine 2012). However, according to internal statistics from MoLSA, by the end of 2011 the educational level of employed Ukrainian citizens was rather low, as the majority of work permit holders only had elementary education (as listed in Table 1). According to available sample surveys, the share of university graduates among Ukrainian work permit holders was 12% in 2001 (Horáková and Čerňanská 2001) and 11% in 2006 (Leontiyeva and Nečasová 2009). Similarly, according to a survey conducted in 2010, 14% of all economically active Ukrainian citizens (including those self-employed) had tertiary education (Leontiyeva and Tollarová 2011). The results of these surveys do not seem to support the popular stereotype of an average Ukrainian as a university-educated construction worker or cleaner. This is primarily due to the fact that the Czech Republic does not attract only well-educated Ukrainian immigrants. According to the available survey data, a large portion of Ukrainian migrants has lower than secondary education, and most of those with extended schooling tend to have skilled jobs. Nevertheless, a comparison of the educational and occupational structure of Ukrainian migration provides evidence of a significant waste of human capital, and suggests that well-educated immigrants are not always successful on the labor market. The risk of over-education among migrants is relatively high; every fifth employed Ukrainian occupies a position in which most other employees have significantly lower education achievement. The finding that post-migration experience might not help Ukrainian immigrants “catch up” in terms of matching higher educational attainment to more appropriate occupations, especially when the starting point is at the bottom rungs of the labor market, is also alarming. Institutional obstacles to labor mobility through the use of job permits as a form of regulation may lower the expectations of immigrants and slow their integration in the Czech Republic. Ukrainians are among the immigrant groups with one of the highest shares of

International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) – MAJOR GROUPS

- 1 Legislators, senior officials, and managers
- 2 Professionals
- 3 Technicians and associate professionals
- 4 Clerks
- 5 Service and sales/shop/market workers
- 6 Skilled agricultural and fishery workers
- 7 Craft and related trade workers
- 8 Plant and machine operators and assemblers
- 9 Elementary occupations

those occupied in unskilled jobs, a phenomenon that cannot be explained by individual characteristics of immigrants, or their mostly unstable legal status or lower educational level. (Leontiyeva 2013) Ukrainian immigration has changed over the last decade. The share of permanent residence permit holders among Ukrainian immigrants has grown significantly, especially following the economic recession, when the Czech state limited the number of new long-term visas and work permits for Ukrainians. There is lit-

tle data on whether Ukrainian immigrants want to settle in the Czech Republic. The results of a 2006 survey among work permit holders revealed that more than one-third of Ukrainian respondents were undecided about their future, while 36% wished to stay in the country for at least five more years. Similarly, about one-third of respondents did not express specific plans to change residence status, but 43% did express a wish to apply for permanent residency, a status that in many respects affords them the same rights as Czech citizens (Leontiyeva 2010). There is no straightforward answer to whether Ukrainian immigrants want to settle down in the Czech Republic, bring their families, and limit contact with the destination country to a minimum. The topic has not been researched enough. The issue of time-limited settlement is highly relevant and yet remains a practically unexplored field. Certain features of Ukrainian immigration support the notion of transnational spaces; for example, the geographical proximity of Ukraine, a high degree of separation from the nuclear family, intensive contact with the country of origin, frequent visits back home, etc. According to a 2010 survey, six in ten economically active Ukrainian immigrants (regardless of gender) has had experience with sending financial remittances to support family and close relatives between

2008 and 2010. This survey, however, suggests that men transfer significantly larger sums than women (approximately 38,000 CZK compared to approximately 26,000 CZK) (Leontiyeva and Tollarová 2011). Despite the fact that Ukrainians are the largest group of non-EU nationals residing in the Czech Republic, many aspects of their immigration remain unexplored. More in-depth research is needed to answer many outstanding questions. To mention at least some of them: *What is the influence of the economic recession on the migration patterns of Ukrainians? Will the new state regulations (aimed at the restriction of low-qualified immigration) have an impact on transnational practices of Ukrainian nationals and their preferences toward settlement in the Czech Republic? Will an observed increase in spatial concentration of Ukrainians result in ghettoization in the future? What is the role of ethnic, economic, and family migration on the integration of Ukrainian immigrants? What is the effect of the long-term over-education of Ukrainian immigrants? Will it hamper their integration into the host society? What is the integration potential of the second generation of Ukrainian immigrants in the Czech Republic?*

The author works at the Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences, in the Czech Republic.

TABLE 1. EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF UKRAINIANS EMPLOYED* IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC IN 2011, ROW %

| | EDUCATIONAL LEVEL | | | | | TOTAL, ABS. N |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|------------|-----------|----------|------|---------------|
| | NO FORMAL EDUCATION | ELEMENTARY | SECONDARY | TERTIARY | N/A | |
| WORK PERMIT HOLDERS | 0.1% | 61.7% | 35.8% | 2.1% | 0.3% | 31,407 |
| OTHER EMPLOYED WITHOUT WORK PERMIT* | 0.9% | 32.3% | 52.7% | 11.4% | 2.7% | 10,696 |

Source: MoLSA 2011; cited from Leontiyeva 2012

Notes: * self-employed citizens are not included. ** employed permanent residence permit holders, Czech school graduates, and family members who do not require work permits.

REFERENCES

1. Later data on the employment of immigrants in the Czech Republic are not available.

REPORT

FORECASTING IMMIGRATION INTO THE V4

MARTA JAROSZEWICZ, WADIM STRIELKOWSKI

What are the immigration prospects of Ukrainian and Moldovan citizens to the European Union? Can they be forecasted? Warsaw-based Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW), in cooperation with think tanks from the V4 and Eastern Europe, has attempted to shed light on this issue.

Internal instability and migration

On 28 April, Moldovan citizens were released from visa obligations while traveling for short-term purposes to the Schengen Area. However, an issue that is currently worrying European policy makers in relation to Eastern Partnership countries is not visa liberalization, but fears that Russian intervention in Crimea may lead to further increased migration from that country.

It is not possible to forecast migration dynamics in the case of protracted political conflicts and internal instability. The impact of democratic accountability, political stability, and ethnic tensions on migration decisions is much more subtle and less researched than the influence of

economic factors. Political factors may trigger mass immigration, but this is above all the case when they substantially affect the quality of life of inhabitants in a given country, particularly their security, job opportunities, and access to public services. As some previous research has demonstrated, long-term political instability affects highly-skilled migrants in particular. After all a skilled labor force is required to reinstate stability and attract foreign investors. When a war scenario becomes a reality, and there are regular armed fights, it usually leads to forced migration, e.g., involuntary movement of internally displaced persons and refugees. In the case of modern armed conflicts, the numbers of refugees are generally high as conflict is rarely limited to clashes just between soldiers, but the physical violence and other abuses also usually affect the civil population.

As of April 2014, there were no premises to state that the internal war

scenario is feasible in the case of Ukraine, who recently experienced regime change and Russian annexation of part of its territory. The same relates to Moldova, which could also experience the negative consequences of Ukrainian instability, particularly a revival of the Transnistria conflict and amplified Russian pressure on Moldovan authorities against its pro-European aspirations.

In the current situation, the political situation will only possibly influence migration in Ukraine and Moldova indirectly. In the case of Ukraine, an increase in political migration abroad on a national scale is not likely to increase as instability only touches a few regions whose populations are characterized by low propensity to migration. However, ethnic Ukrainians from Crimea and Eastern Ukraine may decide to emigrate to other parts of Ukraine or, to a lesser extent, EU states. However, this also relates to Russian-speaking migrants, who will most probably choose Russia as their destination. If Russia toughens regulations regarding the right of Ukrainian and Moldovan workers to reside in its territory, for example following the signing of the Association Agreement with the EU, workers from these states may re-orientate their job search towards EU markets.

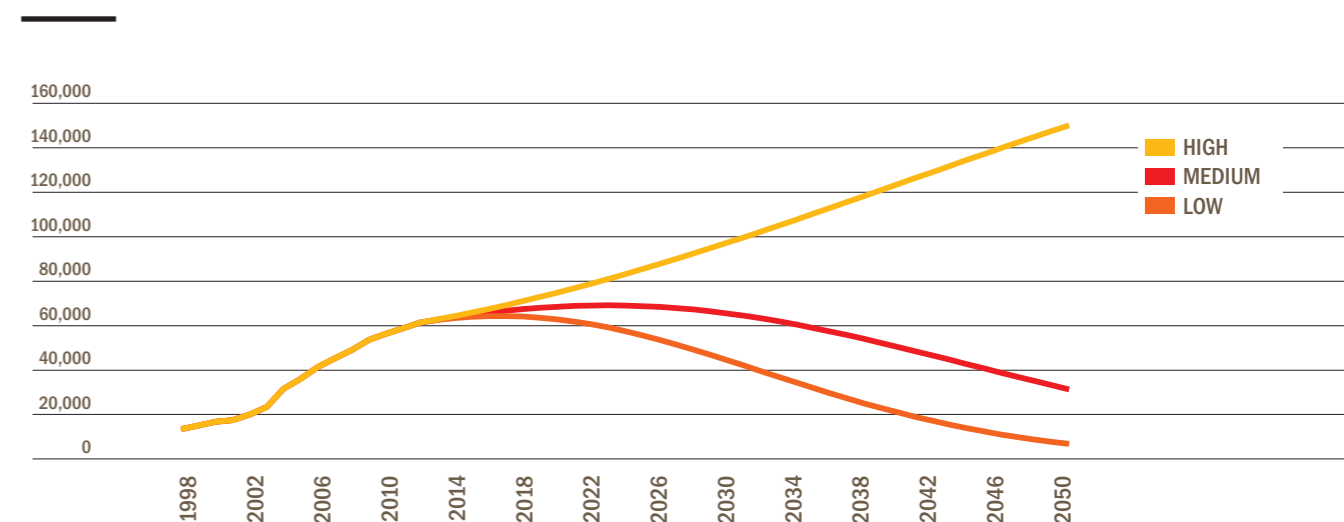
Economics, demography, and migration

It is much easier to present a forecast, or at least scenarios, on the impact of economic factors on further migration. The initial findings of the report "Forecasting migration between the EU, V4, and Eastern Europe: the impact of visa abolition"¹ by the Centre of Eastern Studies (OSW – Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich), a Polish leading think tank and seven other research institutions from Central and Eastern Europe, and co-financed by the International Visegrad Fund, indicate that the most important factor encouraging Ukrainian and Moldovan migrants to go abroad are the high salaries they expect to earn in EU countries, the jobs available, and the presence of family and friends in destination states (so-called migration network effects). The level of salaries and employment in both Ukraine and Moldova also has an impact, if slightly smaller, as well as the favorable immigration policies of particular destination countries. Three forecast variants are presented below: the medium variant (4% increase in GDP annually in Ukraine

and Moldova, and 2% in the EU); the high variant (2% GDP increase in Ukraine and Moldova, and 2% in the EU); and the low variant (6% GDP increase in Ukraine and Moldova, and 2% in the EU). It must be borne in mind, however, that due to imperfection of the statistical data (many migrants reside in the EU illegally, and thus are not captured by statistics, which poorly reflect short-term migration) this forecast is more likely to demonstrate tendencies rather than show actual figures. Furthermore, due to differentials in the methodology and the lack of long-term migration data, the initial model covers only twelve EU countries.

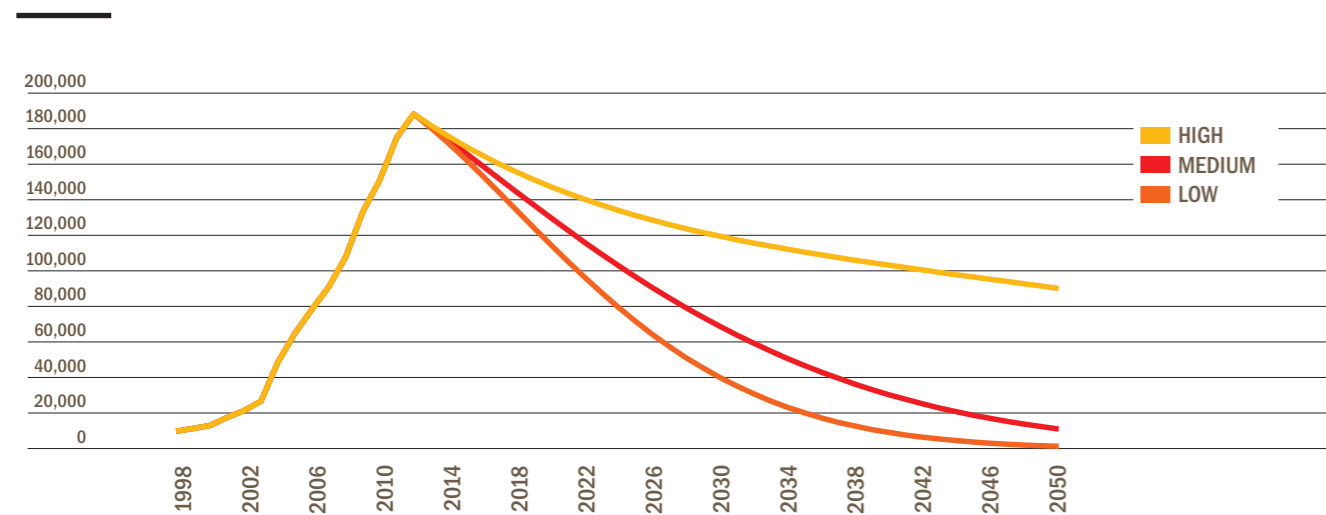
Current Ukrainian migrant stocks in the EU are estimated at approximately one million people. Part stay in the EU irregularly and are thus not captured by our forecast. The most popular final destination countries are as follows: Poland, Italy, the Czech Republic, Spain, and Germany. The number of Ukrainian migrants in EU countries may increase in the next few years (depending on economic parameters). However, this does not necessarily mean that migration dynamics will actually intensify; rather it is to a large extent dependent on the tendency of migrants legalizing their stay abroad (after years or an irregular stay, Ukrainian migrants display a tendency to regulate their status in

GRAPH 1. INITIAL FORECAST OF UKRAINE'S MIGRANT STOCKS IN TWELVE EU COUNTRIES IN 1998-2050: AGGREGATED DATA (THREE VARIANTS)



Source: "Forecasting migration between the EU, V4, and Eastern Europe: the impact of visa abolition"

GRAPH 2. INITIAL FORECAST OF MOLDOVAN'S MIGRANT STOCKS IN TWELVE EU COUNTRIES IN 1998-2050: AGGREGATED DATA (THREE VARIANTS)



Source: "Forecasting migration between the EU, V4, and Eastern Europe: the impact of visa abolition"

the EU states). It can clearly be seen (except in the high variant) that around 2026 or 2028, the stocks of Ukrainian citizens in the EU may start to diminish and this downward trend may persist in the long-term. This is due to demographic decline but also growing employment possibilities in Ukraine.

In the case of Moldova (with population of 3.5 million), it is estimated that around 400,000 to 500,000 Moldovans currently reside abroad, around half of them in EU states. The precise assessment of Moldovan migrant numbers has been complicated by the fact that even as many as 500,000 Moldovans may have Romanian citizenship, and thus in official terms they are not regarded as migrants, although in sociological surveys they are. Our assessment demonstrated that, even in the high scenario, Moldovan migrant stock in the EU may rise until 2014–2016, but is then likely to decrease due to demographic factors. As Moldovan migration displays settlement tendencies, migrants (possibly joined by their families if the immigration policy of destina-

tion states allows) will stay abroad, while the population that remains will not show propensity to migration.

Conclusions: Visas and migration

The possible lifting of the short-term visa requirement by Schengen states for Moldovan and Ukrainian citizens should not cause a serious increase in the number of migrants leaving to the EU. Firstly, over the last twenty years, both states, but Moldova in particular, have displayed high emigration rates despite legal barriers. EU visa liberalization may have certain short-term effects on immigration

(particularly a circular one), although as the cases of Central European and the Western Balkans have exhibited, there is no evidence for impact on longer-term immigration and settlement patterns. Paradoxically, in the case of some Western Balkans states, long-term immigration even dropped after the EU visa requirement was lifted. Secondly, short-term visa abolishment may ease mobility, but it will not solve the main challenge that Ukrainian and Moldovan migrants are currently facing in the EU – it does not grant them the right to legally reside and work.

Marta Jaroszewicz is a migration project coordinator in Centre for Eastern Studies in Warsaw. Wadim Strielkowski is an assistant professor of economics at the Charles University in Prague.

REFERENCES

1. The project is co-financed by the International Visegrad Fund; for more information on the project see: <http://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/projekty/forecasting-migration-between-eu-v4-and-eastern-europe-impact-visa-abolition>

migration

*toward third-country
nationals*

policies

Today, European countries are increasingly often becoming host to citizens of non-EU countries. This article focuses primarily on migration policies of the Visegrad countries.

MARIUSZ PODGÓRSKI

It must be noted that Visegrad countries have not developed a common and coordinated migration policy with regard to third-country nationals, mainly because each state faces different types of immigration. Until the accession of the V4 countries to the European Union in 2004, each was coping with immigration from Eastern Europe in a different way. As new EU member states, the V4 participants had to harmonize their migration policies in 2004–2007 to the policy mandated by the EU. Moreover, the V4 states became a more attractive destination for non-EU foreigners during that period, due to the entrance of V4 to the Schengen Area in 2007, making those countries a transit base for further immigration to Western Europe. Finally, in the 2007–2013 period, national migration policies and initiatives were supported by the "Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows" General Program. The program consisted of

four different funds, of which two – the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals and the European Refugee Fund – were the most significant as they directly affected national migration policies.

POLAND

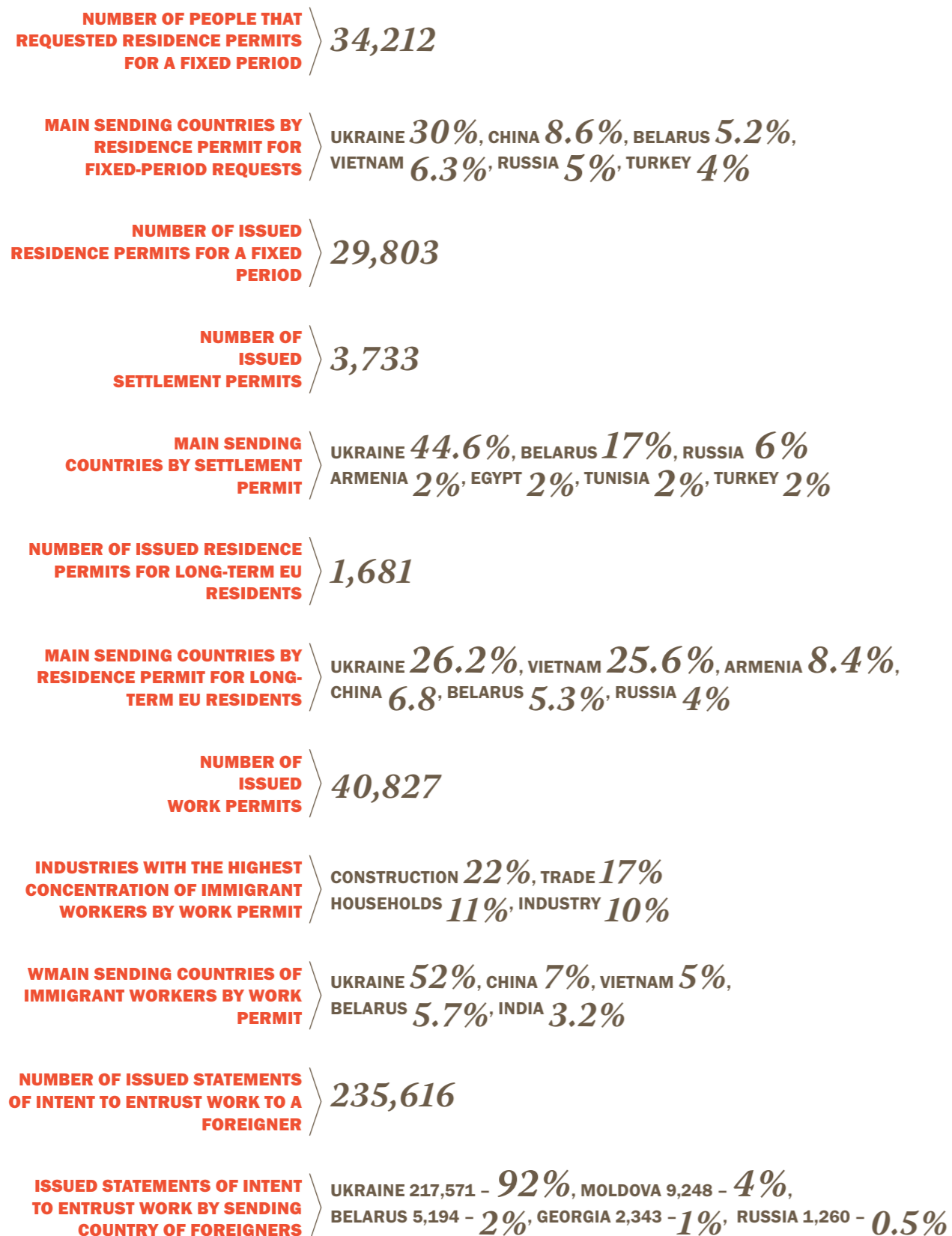
Poland stands out from the rest of the V4 states as it has the lowest proportion of non-nationals (0.1% in 2011¹), and because the primary function of its migration policy is skewed externally (i.e., toward Poland's Eastern Neighbors) rather than internally. It is promoted effectively and used as an instrument by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which decides centrally on visa policy. A good example of this might be the case of Polish policy toward the Kaliningrad Oblast. In 2012, the Local Border Traffic (LBT) agreement came into power, which might be seen as very favorable for the Polish side by increasing local trade exchange. On the other hand, the Polish migration

policy is seen as following a policy of concession toward third countries, particularly in the case of Ukraine.

This is the case because Ukraine is Poland's biggest sending country. In the first half of 2013, 327,000 visas were issued to Ukrainian citizens by Polish outposts and 644,000 in the entirety of 2012. The consulate in Lviv ranks first in the rankings, with a score of 50% of all visas issued, among other Polish outposts. Just after Lviv comes the consulate in Lutsk and the Consular Department in Kyiv. Just one consular outpost in Lviv issues almost the same number of visas as all three Polish outposts in Belarus annually. Moreover, according to the results of the newest "Monitoring of Visa Policy of the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Lutsk," in 2013, 88.3% of applicants in the city were given visas and the number of free-of-charge Schengen Visas issued to Ukrainian applicants rose (only 40% of respondents had to pay for their visas).²

IMMIGRATION TO POLAND IN 2013 – BASIC DATA

Source: Statistics of the Polish Office for Foreigners (2013) and Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (2013).

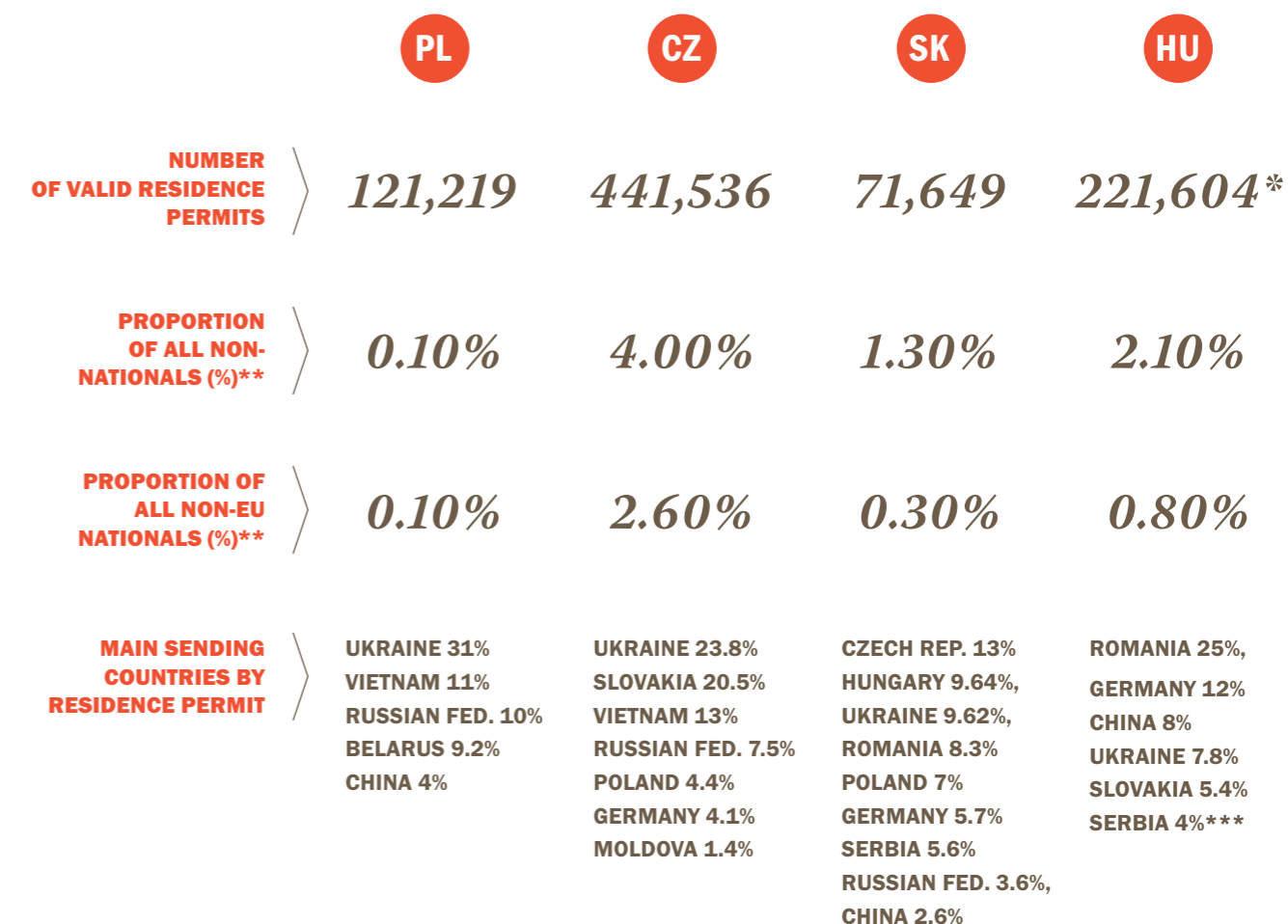


On the other hand, all actions related to foreigners living in Poland fall under, control of the Ministry of Interior and other government officials. The migration and integration policies have benefited from EU funds that paved the way for the creation of individual legislation. In 2012 the ministry finished issuing a summary of the current migration

policy for Poland, which is strongly influenced by general EU trends, and set out potential directions for its further development by publishing a document entitled “Migration Policy of Poland – the Current State and Postulated Actions.” With regard to the integration of foreigners, the following documents should be mentioned: “The Act of Aliens of 13

June 2003,” which is the legal basis for the residence of foreigners in Poland, and whose contents have been upgraded to the form of a new “Act of Aliens of 12 December 2013” that will come into force by 1 May 2014. The new “Act of Polish Citizenship of 2012” can be considered as examples of good practices in integration. Currently on the agenda is the “Polish

IMMIGRATION TO V4 COUNTRIES IN 2013



* The total number of all types of immigrants and persons staying longer than three months, according to data from 31 December 2013, from the Hungarian Office of Immigration and Nationality.

** Data according to the EUROSTAT (2011)

*** Percentage based on data from the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (2013). Since 2011, the numbers of foreigners have changed visibly due to the process of naturalization (i.e. Romania 37% in 2011 and 29% in 2012).

Source: EUROSTAT (2011), the Hungarian Office of Immigration and Nationality (2013), the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (2013), the Czech Statistical Office 2013, the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic (2013), The Statistical Overview of Legal and Illegal Migration in the Slovak Republic, 2013 (Presidium of the Police Force Bureau of Border and Alien Police), The Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic (2013), the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (2013), and the Polish Office for Foreigners (2013).

Integration of Foreigners – Assumptions and Guidelines.”

HUNGARY

According to EUROSTAT in 2011, the proportion of non-EU nationals in Hungary was 0.8%. Until 2013, Hungary did not have any overall policy document on migration policy and the integration of migrants. Until last year, Hungary was lagging behind other countries in the region. The migration strategy was finally elaborated by the Ministry of Interior in August 2013 in the form of the government’s draft Migration Strategy (2014-2020). The Migration Strategy and the seven-year strategic plan related to the Asylum and Migration Fund, established by the EU for the period of 2014-2020, was adopted as a government decree.³

The current Hungarian migration policy has three main features. It supports free movement within the EU and fully respects the Schengen laws, but implements a strict and non-supportive policy toward third-country nationals of non-Hungarian origin. Since 2008, Hungary has created a LBT of 70 km with Ukraine and almost 80% of Ukrainians coming to Hungary are of Hungarian origin. On the other hand, Hungary clearly supports the immigration of ethnic Hungarians in neighboring countries and has created a special legal tool to fulfill this political goal.

The amended citizenship law, which introduces a streamlined and preferential naturalization procedure for persons of Hungarian descent, came into effect in January 2011. It offers full citizenship to all persons who can claim some ethnic Hungarian background and/or one ancestor living on territories separated from Hungary under the Treaty of

Trianon of 1920. Since 2011, more than 550,000 people have received Hungarian citizenship.⁴ According to the data published in April 2013, the total number of naturalization requests and persons who swore new citizenship oaths amounted to 423,000 people, of which 284,000 were from Romania, 77,000 from Serbia, and 51,000 from Ukraine.⁵

SLOVAKIA

Slovakia is a typical transit country and, in recent years, the total number of its non-EU immigrants has decreased in favor of migrants from other EU countries. Third-country citizens make up 0.3% of the whole population and account for only 23% of the total number of migrants to Slovakia. In contemporary Slovakia there is a preference for Czech nationals, which is derived directly from their common history as part of Czechoslovakia. In 2011 the Ministry of Interior prepared a new strategic document (the Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic – perspective until the year 2020) that was adopted by the government in the same year. It was clear that after adopting this document, the government’s next step was the creation of its own migration and integration policy. This was accomplished on 29 January 2014, when a new Concept on Integration Policy of the Slovak Republic, also consulted with NGOs as in Poland, was passed.⁶

THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Even though the Czech Republic does not have a border with any of the Eastern European countries, it stands out among the other V4 states as having the highest proportion of non-EU nationals, namely 2.6% (reaching a level of more than 270,000 in 2011). The most populous groups are from

Ukraine (112,000), Vietnam (57,000), and Russia (32,000). The Czech government adopted the so-called Alien Act in 1999 and it has been amended almost every year; the last time in 2011. The Czech Republic does not have one, specific migration policy document like the other V4 countries, but has updated its “Policy for the Integration of Foreigners – Living Together” from 2011, whose main integration principles are reported every year.⁷

For the Czech government, however, the process of naturalization is much more important than its migration policy. In 2011 alone, 1,936 people gained Czech citizenship, among which non-EU nationals were mostly Ukrainians (501), Russians (58), Vietnamese (86), and Kazakhs (48).⁸

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, all V4 countries have their own migration and integration policies and their own migration principles. Poland and Slovakia have the lowest proportion of migrants among their populations, and might be described as transit countries. The Czech Republic and Hungary are strongly focused on the naturalization procedure, although their goals are different: Hungary is much more interested in non-EU nationals of Hungarian origin.

The majority of these states have already created and issued their migration documents, which correspond closely to the principles of the EU’s policy and the Migration and Asylum Fund for the 2014-2020 period. The EU’s policy is aimed at integrating its new members’ actions and policies into the wider framework of various European funds.

The author is a researcher at the Migration Studies Institute.

DIASPORA ORIENTED ORGANIZATION IN THE V4

MAGDALENA MAZUR

Main units responsible for diaspora-related issues

CZECH REPUBLIC

SPECIAL ENVOY FOR CZECHS LIVING ABROAD, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS // ČR PRO KRAJANSKÉ ZÁLEŽITOSTI, MINISTERSTVA ZAHRANIČNÍCH VĚCÍ // The Foreign Ministry team responsible for relations with Czechs living abroad is headed by the Special Envoy for Czechs Living Abroad. The creation of the CLAO in 2008 was driven by the need to elevate the status of dealing with the diaspora within the Czech public administration/government system. Until 2008 the diaspora-related program was administered by one of the departments of the MFA.

HUNGARY

THE STATE SECRETARIAT OF HUNGARIAN COMMUNITIES ABROAD, MINISTRY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND JUSTICE // NEMZETPOLITIKAI ÁLLAMTITKÁRSÁG, KÖZIGAZGATÁSI ÉS IGAZSÁGÜGYI MINISZTERIUM //

The person responsible for policy concerning Hungarian communities abroad at the highest political level is the deputy prime minister. The SSHCA is in charge of the policy’s operational activities. The unit took over the responsibilities of the Government Office for Hungarian Minorities Abroad, which ceased to exist in 2006. Hungary has traditionally been active in the field of kin-state politics; however, policies addressing the issues of the Hungarian diaspora worldwide have only come to the forefront in recent years. This concern was manifested in various programs launched by the Hungarian government as well as in institutional reforms aimed at the optimal coordination of policies concerning the diaspora.

POLAND

DEPARTMENT OF COOPERATION WITH POLISH DIASPORA AND POLES ABROAD, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS // DEPARTAMENT WSPÓŁPRACY Z POLONIĄ I POLAKAMI ZA GRANICĄ, MINISTERSTWO SPRAW ZAGRANICZNYCH)

Since 2013, DCWPDPA has been operating under the Undersecretary of State for Development Cooperation, Polish Diaspora and Eastern Policy. It was created, as an individual MFA unit in 2009. The main motive behind the decision was to underline the significant role that Polish diaspora issues are to play in Polish foreign policy, as well as in the Polish MFA’s activities. It was considered essential to separate diaspora policy from consular matters; these issues had traditionally been combined. The initial name – Department

REFERENCES

1. EUROSTAT: *Population and social conditions*, 31/12, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-SF-12-031/EN/KS-SF-12-031-EN.PDF.
2. Моніторинг реалізації візової політики Генерального Консульства Республіки Польща у м. Луцьк, ВОГО “Фонд місцевого розвитку”, Міжнародний Фонд “Відродження”, Луцьк 2013.
3. “New Migration Strategy Published,” website of the Hungarian Government, 6 August 2013, <http://www.kormany.hu/en/ministry-of-interior/news/new-migration-strategy-published>.
4. “Németh: A honosítás jövője a választások sikerétől is függ”, Magyar Hírlap, 2 January 2014, <http://www.magyarhirlap.hu/nemeth-a-honositas-jovoje-a-valasztasok-sikeretol-fugg>.
5. A. Sadecki, Hungary: *Half a Million New Citizens*, OSW Analyses, 11 December 2013, <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2013-12-11/hungary-half-a-million-new-citizens>.
6. <http://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/ministerstvo/integracia-cudzincov/zameranie-integracnej-politiky-sr.html>
7. <http://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/article/integration-of-foreigners-within-the-territory-of-the-czech-republic.aspx>
8. See more on website of the Czech Statistical Office, *Number of Foreigners*, http://www.czso.cz/csu/cizinci.nsf/engkapitola/ciz_pocet_cizincu.

of Cooperation with Polish Diaspora – was changed in 2012 to underline the fact that the Polish MFA is engaged in cooperation with all individuals claiming to have Polish roots and living outside of Poland – both representatives of Polish minorities and Polish citizens living abroad.

SLOVAKIA

OFFICE FOR THE SLOVAKS LIVING ABROAD // ÚRAD PRE SLOVÁKOV ŽIJÚCICH V ZAHRANIČÍ //

The OSLA was established by virtue of the Act on Slovaks Living Abroad and on Amendments and Additions to Certain Laws in 2005, which was passed as a result of a conference gathering the representatives of the Slovak diaspora and state bodies of the Slovak Republic in 2004. The competences were transferred from the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic and from the Slovak Republic Government Office. The Office reports to the government of the Slovak Republic.

Grant giving units

CZECH REPUBLIC

The CLAO is responsible for the provision of financial donations for the society's cultural projects (including projects run by the Czech School Without Borders), for the maintenance and repair of Czech compatriot schools, cultural facilities, and small monuments abroad (over 500,000 euros in 2014). The funds are allocated through Czech diplomatic posts. The MFA also holds a yearly call for applications for NGOs focused on international cooperation, including cooperation with diaspora communities.

HUNGARY

THE BETHLEN GÁBOR FOUND (BETHLEN GÁBOR ALAP)

BGF and the Bethlen Gábor Fund Management Private Limited Non-Profit Company are the central bodies that coordinate support for Hungarian kin-minorities and the Hungarian diaspora. For the diaspora, BGF finances and implements the Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Scholarship Program; however, most of its application options are designed for Hungarian kin-minorities in the Carpathian Basin. Diaspora organisations may also obtain grants for projects concerning Hungarian language and culture through the Balassi Institute.

POLAND

The DCWPPA allocates funds with a yearly call for applications open to Polish organisations and institutions implementing diaspora-oriented projects (close to 15,000,000 euros in 2014). The aim of the contest is to help the Polish diaspora and Poles abroad carry out schemes relating to Polish community media, schools, and community infrastructure, as well as teaching Polish, in Polish, and about Poland. Diaspora organisations may acquire funding through Polish diplomatic posts abroad or subgranting organisations (e.g., The Foundation Aid to Poles in the East and the "Polish Community" Association).

SLOVAKIA

Diaspora organisations are eligible to apply in OSLA's call for applications (around 1,000,000 euros in 2013). This financial support is aimed at promoting the national consciousness and cultural identity of Slovaks living abroad, supporting institutions established for that purpose, and promoting relations between the Slovak Republic and Slovaks living abroad.

Other governmental and parliamentary units

CZECH REPUBLIC

Except for the CLAO, there is no other body in the system of the Czech government whose only agenda is Czech diaspora issues. There are, however, departments in other ministries acting partially in this area (e.g. Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Ministry of Health, and even Ministry of Defense). Their work is coordinated by the Special Envoy. In the Parliament of the Czech Republic, the Special Envoy cooperates with the Senate Standing Commission on Compatriots Living Abroad and with the Chamber of Deputies Foreign Affairs Committee, in particular its Subcommittee on Relations with Czechs Living Abroad, Promotion of the Czech Republic Abroad and External Economic Relations.

HUNGARY

At the parliamentary level, the Parliamentary Commission for National Cohesion, established in January 2011, deals with Hungarian communities all over the world (kin-minorities and the diaspora).

POLAND

The Polish Senate holds patronage over the Polish diaspora and was responsible for the provision of financial support to Polish communities abroad until 2012. Today, it strives to maintain ties with Poles and people of Polish origin residing abroad mainly through the work of the Emigration Affairs and Contacts with Poles Abroad Committee. In the lower house of the Polish parliament, there is also another Committee for Contacts with Poles Abroad.

SLOVAKIA

Certain units of the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Work, Social Issues, and Family are responsible for dealing with issues related to the free movement of people within the EU. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research, and Sport supports Slovak language education abroad.

Non-governmental organizations and other institutions

CZECH REPUBLIC

CZECH SCHOOL WITHOUT BORDERS (ČESKÁ ŠKOLA BEZ HRANIC)

The CSWB is a non-profit organization registered in the Czech Republic that connects all of the CSWB local branches. CSWB offers Czech language and culture/history classes for children from the ages of 18 months to 15 years, complementing the day-to-day education that children of Czech origin receive in schools abroad.

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION (DŮM ZAHRANIČNÍCH SLUŽEB)

The CIC is an organization established by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports of the Czech Republic, which undergirds relations with foreign educational institutions and provides an information service to international applicants to study courses in the CR.

HUNGARY

BALASSI INSTITUTE (BALASSI INTÉZET)

The Balassi Institute is the institution that plays a central role in the realization of diaspora policy; it provides a Program in Hungarian Language and Culture, as well as other linguistic and cultural training, and special grants for the diaspora.

SECRETARIAT OF HUNGARIANS LIVING ABROAD (HATÁRON TÚLI MAGYAROK TITKÁRSÁGA)

The duty of the SHLA is to augment the work of both the Hungarian Scientists Abroad Presidential Committee and the Council of Hungarian Scientists in Diaspora, which handle issues related to Hungarian science abroad.

POLAND

FOUNDATION AID TO POLES IN THE EAST (FUNDACJA POMOC POLAKOM NA WSCHODZIE)

FAPE was established by the Polish government (State Treasury) in 1992 to provide aid and support to Poles living in the states of the former USSR and the former Communist Bloc in Central and Eastern Europe.

ASSOCIATION "POLISH COMMUNITY" (STOWARZYSZENIE WSPÓLNOTA POLSKA)

The APC was established in 1990 at the initiative of the Marshal of the Polish Senate and is entirely dedicated to strengthening ties between Poland and its diaspora.

CENTER FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLISH EDUCATION ABROAD (OŚRODEK ROZWOJU POLSKIEJ EDUKACJI ZA GRANICĄ)

The CDPEA supports and promotes the learning of the Polish language among young Poles living or spending time abroad.

SLOVAKIA

MATICA SLOVENSKÁ

MS is a scientific and cultural institution established in 1863 that focuses on issues around Slovak patriotism and the nation, including the diaspora.

CZECH REPUBLIC

There is no worldwide umbrella organization networking Czech diaspora organisations. There are few organizations of this kind acting at the national level.

HUNGARY

HUNGARIAN DIASPORA COUNCIL (MAGYAR DIASZPÓRA TANÁCS)

The Hungarian government established the HDC in 2011, a forum of organizations for Hungarians throughout the world. The organizations elect the board of the Council on a geographical basis, the members of which are in constant touch with the Hungarian government.

POLAND

There is no worldwide umbrella organization networking Polish diaspora organisations; however, there are organizations representing Polish communities abroad at a national level (e.g., the Canadian Polish Congress and the Congress of Poles in the Czech Republic).

SLOVAKIA

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF SLOVAKS LIVING ABROAD (SVETOVÉ ZDRUŽENIE SLOVÁKOV V ZAHRAŇIČÍ)

The WASLA was established in 2002 at the standing conference "Slovak Republic and Slovaks living abroad" as a representative body for the Slovak diaspora worldwide. It is a member of the the Europeans Throughout The World network.

Umbrella diaspora organizations

The author is the Head of International Program at School for Leaders in Warsaw. Her areas of expertise include leadership development as well as increasing civic and political participation among the Polish diaspora.

EUROPEAN COMMUTERS



Photo: Ester Erdey

Frontiers and daily migration are both a source of business and a potential tool for enhancing stronger mutual trust. Would you cross borders to get to work?

MATTEO TACCONI

The Viennese in Bratislava

Nobody knows how many Viennese live in Bratislava, but locals are sure that hundreds have settled in the city in recent years, at least judging by the growing number of cars with Viennese plates circulating in the Slovak capital. Neither this observation nor discussions on expat web forums provide statistical evidence of this exodus. In the forums, however, the two main reasons behind it do emerge: cheap apartments and the fast connection between the two cities.

In Vienna, apartment prices range between 2,500 and 3,298 euros per square meter. By contrast, the average price for a flat in Bratislava is 1,670 euros, according to globalpropertyguide.com, a website that monitors the real estate market globally. It quotes data released by the Chamber of Commerce of Vienna and the Slovak National Bank.

With regard to connections, the distance between the two cities, a mere 60 km, can be covered in an hour by train or car – along the new motorway inaugurated in 2007. To sum up, those who ultimately decide to move from Vienna to Bratislava may save money on housing and can commute easily from their new place of residence to offices in Vienna and then back home, late in the evening.

Slovak villagers

The same philosophy has inspired people from Bratislava who choose to settle in small Austrian villages just beyond the border, to which Bratislava's outskirts stretch. Unlike the previous example, this story is real and concrete. There are many articles in respected newspapers both in Vienna and Bratislava telling of the Slovak march to these tiny towns.

Among them Wolfsthal and Kittsee, two typical Austrian villages, with single-floor, small villas standing along the main road, have welcomed the highest number of newcomers. Apartments are cheaper than in Bratislava, where real estate, as well as construction, boomed from European Union accession (2004) to the beginning of the global crisis (2008). Now, prices have gone down, but are still higher than those in Kittsee and Wolfsthal.

Gerhard Schrodinger, the mayor of Wolfsthal, is viewed as a pioneer of Slovak-Austrian friendship. Once a border guard, married to a Slovak woman, he has always advocated warmer ties between the two nations. He personally welcomes each Slovak family that settles in his town, which now is much better connected to Bratislava's city center. It takes no more than twenty minutes to get there by car, but there is also a bus line explicitly for Slovak commuters. It stops and leaves from the Bridge of the Slovak National Uprising, which spans the Danube and connects Bratislava's downtown with Petralka, a huge settlement built during communist times.

Such border commuting is not confined to Vienna, Bratislava, and the small Austrian villages close to Slovakia. It is a much wider trend taking place all over Central Europe. It constitutes a phenomenon that may be described as a large daily migration within Europe's borders.

Szczecin rescues northeastern Germany

When experts analyze Poland's economic boom, they often highlight that German financial and industrial investments are one of the main engines behind the remarkable progress made by

the biggest nation of enlarged Europe. This is indeed true.

Sometimes, however, it happens that Poland becomes vital to Germany's prosperity. The northeastern border regions of Germany are a case study in this sense. They were among the weakest districts of the former German Democratic Republic and are one of the less developed areas of Germany today. People have moved to Berlin and other big German towns seeking jobs. The population has shrunk, dozens of companies have gone bankrupt and some schools have been closed.

This trend would have continued if Poland had not experienced such good economic performance in recent years. Despite the fact that it is not listed among fast-growing Polish cities, Szczecin, a coastal town of 400,000 people close to the border, has deeply improved its standards in the last years, gaining a new dynamism. This has been a miracle for the German villages close to the frontier, since it has given them a way to revive their economic and social lives. As prices for apartments in Szczecin have gone up, a consequence of growth and higher salaries, hundreds of middle-class Poles have bought houses in Gartz, Rosow, and other German villages, attracted by lower costs. Like Slovaks who move from Bratislava to Wolfsthal, once settled in their new homes they start commuting daily to their workplaces in Poland (it takes thirty minutes by car), crossing the border and boosting another daily European migration route.

Furthermore, as reported in May 2013 by *Reuters* in a story about cross-border relations between Szczecin and northeastern Germany, the newcomers have halted the demographic decline of German towns and, by sending their pupils to local schools, have allowed the authorities to avoid further cuts in education.

Paradoxically, in 2004, before Poland's accession to the EU, Szczecin's residents feared that Germans would cross the border and buy up the city. But things are unpredictable on the frontier.

Low-cost dental care in Sopron

Sopron is a nice Hungarian city bordering Austria, 80 km from Vienna. It is also a symbol of European reunification. In the summer of 1989, two great events took place in its countryside, both accelerating the fall of the Berlin Wall. The first was a meeting between Austria and Hungary's foreign ministers, Alois Mock and Gyula Horn. They cut the barbed wire along the border, paving the way to a new era of cooperation. The second, in August, was the Pan-European Picnic, an initiative promoted by the Austrian politician Otto von Hamburg and Hungarian liberal-minded communist Imre Pozsgay. On that day, the borders remained symbolically open for three hours, to confirm the countries' desire to lift the Iron Curtain and end the Cold War. Several Eastern Germans spending their holidays in Hungary, heard of the event, went to the Sopron countryside, and crossed the border, fleeing the East. It was a terrific blow to the regime of Eric Honecker, showing that people wanted to leave the country.

Now, times have changed. Hungary joined the EU in 2004 and the Schengen Area in 2007. There are no longer checks at the border, and people can cross in both directions. Given what happened in August 1989, however, flow is much more intense from west to east, from Austria to Hungary. The fact is that the city has turned into one of the biggest strongholds of European dental tourism, attracting Austrian patients and fostering yet another form of daily migration.

In Sopron, a fashionable town with the flavor of *Mittleuropa*, there is the highest density of dentists in the European bloc, one per 1,090 inhabitants. Each clinic provides cheaper tariffs than those offered beyond the border. The European Centre for Social Welfare Policy Research, a UN-affiliated inter-governmental organization, outlines in a paper on dental care in Hungary that a removable dental prosthesis costs between 550 and 610 euros in Sopron, while in Austria the cost averages 1,150 euros. For a non-removable, ceramic crown the price is 280 euros in Sopron and 866 euros in Austria. This, coupled with the massive advertisement campaign by local clinics, has brought many Austrians to Sopron. Most are satisfied with the quality of services, the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy Research reports.

Austrians are not the only foreign clients of Sopron clinics, although they are the main contributors to their annual profits. In recent years, several hundred northeastern Italians have travelled to Sopron to take advantage of cheap dental care, as Trieste and Venice are not far from the Hungarian town. The flow of Italian patients has slowed recently, however, as new low-cost dental districts, much closer to Italy's borders, are flourishing right now in northern Croatia. But that is another story.

Beyond the European bloc

Daily migrations in Central Europe do not only involve the citizens of EU member states. There are masses of people moving from Europe's eastern neighbors to Visegrad countries. Ukrainians go to Poland and Hungary, Belarusians to Poland, and Russians from Kaliningrad to Poland and Lithuania. Evaluating these flows in terms of economy, commerce, and mutual cultural exchange depends on visa rules. The more strict the regulations are, the less daily migrations can be assessed in detail.

For a number of years the EU has promoted local border traffic agreements, which authorize the implementation of bilateral arrangements between

EU member states and extra-communitarian countries, giving advantages to border residents on both sides of the frontier. One of the most successful such stories is that of the local border traffic agreement signed by Warsaw and Moscow in 2011, which gives Russians from the Kaliningrad exclave a chance to obtain temporary, free visas to the Polish Baltic area. Poles living in these territories can also get visas to travel to Kaliningrad.

Nobody expected that the deal would bring so many Kaliningrad residents over the border (the flow of Poles to Kaliningrad is thinner). According to *The Economist*, in July 2013 the Polish consulate in Kaliningrad issued its 100,000th visa, while in the first half of 2013 Russians spent around 15 million euros in Poland.

Where do the Russians go? What do they buy? They primarily visit Gdansk, Elblag, and Olsztyn. They shop at cheap grocery stores, buying food and drink. Some of them also go to Ikea in Gdansk or other places where they can buy nonperishables that they cannot find in Kaliningrad.

But this story is about more than shopping. People from Kaliningrad get a taste of Poland beyond meat and beer; the Poles, in addition to business opportunities, have the chance to interact with their neighbors on a daily basis. This can stimulate better relations between the two peoples, overcoming prejudices stemming from political and historic rivalries between Warsaw and Moscow.

Frontiers and daily migrations are thus a source business, but also a potential tool for enhancing stronger mutual trust, regardless of political relations between states, and visa restrictions do not necessarily represent a hurdle. Thousands of Belarusians, for example, flock to Poland every day, despite the fact that Minsk has not yet signed into effect the local border traffic agreement negotiated with Warsaw in 2010, reportedly for political reasons. According to the Polish Office of Statistics, in July-September 2013, Belarusians spent around 180 million euros beyond the border. In other words, they spent more on shopping more than both Ukrainians and Russians.

The author is an Italian journalist and editor at *Rassagna East*.

THE POLISH QUARTERLY OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

A QUARTERLY IN ENGLISH;

IT CONTAINS ORIGINAL ARTICLES AND REVIEWS



Quarterly is available at

eBOOKSTORE
www.pism.pl/ebookstore

STICKY OR ELECTION-CLINCHER? ISSUE

Although European elections in the UK tend to be fought on domestic issues, V4 migrants will find themselves at the center of a fierce debate in May 2014. European immigration to the UK remains a toxic political legacy six years after the opening up of Central and Eastern European labor markets. However, there is also an opportunity to bring about a full reappraisal of the issue, as new evidence and a drive among politicians, business leaders, and resident migrants begins to change the debate.

MATHEW SHEARMAN

When likely voters were polled on the most important issue affecting the UK in January 2014, immigration was the most popular response alongside “the economy,” with 41% of responses mentioning it. Both the complexity of immigration data and the lack of reliable information on its diverse economic and social impact, however, have enabled it to become an easy talking point filled with emotion, rather than a well understood policy area.

IMMIGRATION AS A POLITICAL HEURISTIC

The political debate on the legacy of V4 immigration in the UK has become little more than a heuristic for a number of the socio-economic challenges facing the UK. In the age of austerity, increased competition for finite welfare resources has created a well of resentment as people face challenges in accessing benefits, housing, healthcare, and jobs.

The 2008 “wave” of immigration, as the arrival of Poles, Hungarians, Czechs, and Slovaks is remembered, has led to their stigmatization as parasites of the state. “Economic migration” generally



▲ Campaign banners on the street in Manchester.

refers to people who come to take advantage of the welfare system (or paradoxically British jobs), rather than movement by people who want to work in the UK. Many politicians from across the political spectrum have proven powerless in combating or complicit in supporting this view.

The underlying economic challenges facing many working class Britons have partly been made attributable to rising immigration rates. As new figures have revealed that net migration increased by 212,000 in 2013,¹ politicians have instinctively scrambled to appear tough on reducing numbers. Further economic cuts of up to 25 billion GBP after 2015² suggest that the climate of deep antagonism between different communities will worsen beyond the next general election.

Elisabeth Pop, Policy and Research Officer at HOPE not Hate, a leading anti-racism group in the UK, has tracked

politicians from all political parties upping their anti-immigration rhetoric ahead of the next European elections. Distinguishing hateful rhetoric from people’s legitimate concerns about social cohesion and crime, she was keen to emphasize that her research suggested that actual cases of social upheaval “are not as widespread as the extreme right press might have us believe.” Instead, it is an image created to stoke fears of further cultural and economic disadvantage for political ends.

THE IMPACT OF UKIP

The governing Conservative Party has set out an arbitrary reduction target for net migration to less than 100,000 people a year. Policy measures to stop perceived “healthcare tourists” and “benefit tourists” from accessing public services have also been made, despite evidence that nearly twice as many foreigners pay for



▲ The Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk shakes hands with UKIP leader and member of the European Parliament Nigel Farage. credit:

healthcare on the NHS than receive it subsidized by the state.³ These policy measures reveal more about the political insurgency by the populist UK Independence Party (UKIP) than they do about the impact of immigration to the UK.

Recent polls suggest that they will draw one in five voters in the European elections⁴ and could very well finish in second place, ahead of both governing parties.⁵ Born as an anti-EU party, UKIP has harnessed resentment over increased immigration as a key issue in their differentiation from the three mainstream parties.

At UKIP's party conference earlier this year, Nigel Farage described his feeling of discomfort at not understanding the languages being spoken on a London train. This simple and personal example makes his more complex claim that the UK has a "totally distorted labor market because of the massive oversupply that has come to us from Eastern Europe" relatable.

UKIP has harnessed this view of immigration to support its broader aim of EU withdrawal by making the argument that it restricts the UK's ability to manage the impact of immigration. This view is rarely challenged, in part because Farage attacks mainstream parties as a "politi-

cal class that had sold out to Brussels." By leaning on immigration and disillusionment with mainstream parties, UKIP has now positioned itself as a patriotic "common sense" alternative on both immigration and EU issues.

THE SHIFTING NARRATIVE

Until March 2014, there was little indication that immigration would feature any differently than in previous elections. In 2010 politicians raced to make promises that they could restrict flows of immigration, thereby easing the burden of recession on British voters. Yet a government report released in the first week of March 2014 may provide the catalyst for refreshing the debate.

The UK government's recent immigration report⁶ has found relatively little evidence of displacement of UK natives from the labor market during economically strong periods. Although some job losses could be expected when the economy was weaker and net migration higher, the economy did adjust slowly and the impact was short-term. Further studies published in February 2014 have also revealed the positive side of this process, as one in every seven new businesses is created by migrants.⁷ It is less remarkable that these benefits have been discovered than the

fact that businesses and politicians are beginning to promote these findings.

To some extent, the new momentum to reappraise immigration has been a product of a concurrent debate regarding the future of Britain within the European Union. With the slow march to a possible exit, interested business groups have begun to mobilize to promote the diverse economic benefits of continued membership.

Lucy Thomas, Deputy Director of Business for New Europe (BNE), is one of many keen to share the role that V4 migration has played in increasing the UK economy by 5 billion GBP. In representing multinational corporations, she cites the huge negative impact that restricting migration would have on the single market. BNE's "Migration – Making it Work"⁸ notes that EU migrants contributed 37% more in taxes than they received in services in the UK. Immigration reform, such as a six-month limit on jobseekers' allowance, is supported, but the argument is made as part of a broader rebuttal of anti-European groups and without the visceral anger against EU migrants.

This shift has breathed new life into the political party debate in the months before the European elections. Following publication of the delayed government report, Vince Cable, the Liberal Democrat Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, has criticized the Conservative Party out for "fanning the flames of prejudice."⁹ Simultaneously, David Hanson MP, shadow immigration minister, has called for an "open, calm, and fact-based debate on the impact of immigration."

With new evidence and the genuine threat of a European exit driving the debate, for the first time there is a political imperative to cut through the heuristic of immigration and reappraise it on a factual basis. It remains to be seen whether this ambitious start can provide the necessary momentum for election day and beyond.

MOBILIZING MIGRANTS FOR THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS

It would be wrong to suggest that V4 migrants are simply the objects and victims of a political narrative driven by British political groups in the UK. There are now approximately 2.4 million EU migrants of voting age residing in the UK, and they could present a significant shift in voter demographics in the next European elections.

Working in conjunction with community organizations such as the Federation of Poles in Great Britain, groups such as HOPE not Hate are working to support voter registration and turnout among migrant groups. In a speech to the Congress of Student Polish Societies in the UK, Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski encouraged students to vote, to show the government how young Polish people in the UK feel.¹⁰ As Elisabeth Pop has written, this coordinated cooperation among Central and Eastern European communities was "triggered by the unprecedented hate media which scapegoated them for all the ills in British society."¹¹ In February 2014, this was seen in a demonstration by around 500 Polish and Romanian residents outside the Houses of Parliament

against the climate of discrimination that had developed in the UK.¹²

Precious little research has been conducted into voting preferences in Central and Eastern European communities, but it is clear that in the current climate, these communities have been left feeling stigmatized by the current government's rhetoric. There is now an opportunity for the Labour Party to present an alternative vision for the role of EU migrants and shift the debate ahead of the general election in 2015.

A STEP-CHANGE IN THE IMMIGRATION DEBATE?

Migrants from V4 countries have long been used to providing headlines in the *Daily Mail* and other tabloid media in the UK. This has only intensified as UKIP has become a greater electoral threat. But in the run up to the European elections there are many reasons to think that the heuristic of immigration may start to be rewritten.

The concurrent debate around the future of the EU has produced new advocates for a fact-based discussion on the benefits of EU immigration, and, for their part, V4 migrants in the UK are now in a position to vote in protest of their portrayal in the UK. For these reasons the European elections in 2014 may also present the beginning of much longer reappraisal of immigration in the UK.

The author is the political editor of *Europe & Me* magazine and a contributor to *New Eastern Europe*. He writes on UK and German foreign policy, EU politics, and Central and Eastern Europe.

REFERENCES

- Office of National Statistics, "Migration Statistics Quarterly Report, February 2014," May 22 2014.
- Reuters, "UK needs 25 billion pounds of spending cuts after 2015 vote, Osborne says," 6 January 2014 www.uk.reuters.com/.
- Johanna Hanefeld, Daniel Horsfall, Neil Lunt, Richard Smith, "Medical tourism: a cost or benefit to the NHS?" *PLoS ONE* 8(10) (2013).
- ICM/Guardian poll, February 9 2014.
- YouGov/Sun poll, January 15 2014.
- Ciaran Devlin, Olivia Bolt, Dhiren Patel, David Harding, Ishtiaq Hussain, "Impacts of migration on UK native employment: An analytical review of the evidence," Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, Home Office, March 2014.
- Centre for Entrepreneurs, DueDil, "Migrant Entrepreneurs: Building Our Businesses Creating Our Jobs."
- Business for New Europe, "Migration – making it work," May 2013.
- The Huffington Post* UK/PA, "Vince Cable Says 'The Tories Are Fanning The Flames Of Prejudice' Over Immigration Row," March 8 2014, <http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk>.
- Radosław Sikorski, Speech to the Congress of Polish Student Societies, Oxford Union, March 9 2014.
- Elisabeth Pop, "EU migrant voters stand up to the politics of hate and fear," February 27 2014, <http://www.hopenothate.org.uk>.
- mk/nh, "UK Poles in Downing Street anti-discrimination protest," *Polskie Radio*, February 24 2014, <http://www.thenews.pl>.



David Michman/Will/Forum

Freedom of movement and cross-border migration

RECENT DEBATES

ON EU IMMIGRATION

POLICIES

JĘDRZEJ BURSZA

One of the most fundamental values of the European Union is the freedom of movement. In 1985 all EU countries signed the Schengen Agreement, which proposed the gradual abolition of border checks and replacing national borders with a borderless Schengen Area. The treaty, first signed by five members of the bloc, was later implemented by other countries, with the exception of the United Kingdom and Ireland, who preferred not to join, and Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, and Cyprus, whose requisite external border controls were not all in place. Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein, although not EU members, also joined the agreement. Most of Europe became open to mobility, which influenced the growth of legal migration between European states.

In October 2013, a boat carrying hundreds of migrants sank near the Italian island of Lampedusa, resulting in more than 350 dead. The tragic accident renewed criticism of the EU's approach to border management and irregular migration, resulting in media debates in member countries about the intertwined issues

of migration and welfare policies. One of the results of the “senseless tragedy,” as it was termed by the media, was the introduction of Eurosur, a pan-European surveillance system, in December 2013. According to research conducted by the European network United for Intercultural Action, more than 17,000 migrant deaths have been documented since 1993. The Lampedusa tragedy was perceived as evidence that the migration situation had not been properly assessed, and that more restrictive and control-based policies only seem to lead to more death and suffering.

In January 2014, the opening of European labor markets to residents of Bulgaria and Romania, the newest members of the EU, sparked heated debates in the United Kingdom. Conservative media and politicians both accentuated fears of an influx of “poverty migration” that was supposed to spread across Europe in the months to follow. The UK government responded to these fears by announcing that as of 1 January 2014, the country's welfare provisions would be tightened to make it harder for migrants moving to Britain to establish themselves. David Cameron also discussed introduction of a system of quotas designed to restrict the freedom of movement as well as the freedom to choose place of residence and employment constituting much stricter rules on citizens of new countries joining the EU. Some British commentators perceived this change of heart as a result of the upcoming EU elections, noting that like John McCain, George W. Bush, and other Republican leaders in the U.S., Conservative Party establishment candidates have tactically “moved to the right” on the issue of immigration strictly for election purposes. If they succeed in the elections, Cameron's party will most probably reverse direction and return to a pro-EU integration course, although British popular opinion remains divided as to the future of the EU. This may prove a critical issue that will certainly be raised during the proposed referendum on continued UK membership in the EU, announced for 2017.

A similar situation can be found in Germany. Conservative parties are calling for the introduction of tight restrictions on welfare payments to immigrants from Bulgaria and Romania. Their anti-immigration campaign ran under the slogan: “Those who commit fraud are out,” distributed on a pamphlet published by representatives of the Bavarian party

CSU (Christian Social Union), the sister party to Angela Merkel's conservative CDU (Christian Democratic Union). The pamphlet outlined a new immigration policy proposal, including a suggested three-month ban on welfare payments for immigrants. The Social Democratic Party (SDP), the center-left coalition partner of Merkel's government, accused the conservatives of pandering to populist sentiment.

Marine Le Pen, the leader of France's rightwing nationalist Front National, and Geert Wilders, the Dutch anti-Islam campaigner, have announced that they will be joining forces ahead of European parliamentary elections. Their common goal is exploitation of the euroscepticism soaring across the EU, especially in recent months. The two big policy areas shared by the conservative parties are anti-immigration and anti-EU sentiments.

In February 2014, Switzerland voted by a narrow 50.3% to limit immigration to the country. “Freedom of movement is a fundamental core value of the European Union and as such is not open for negotiation,” chief operating officer of the EU external affairs service David O'Sullivan said of the referendum's outcome. The vote is understood as a consequence of accepting the EU's commitment to free passage within the borders of the Schengen Area. While not a member of the EU, Switzerland is closely associated with the bloc by numerous bilateral pacts; furthermore, the decision to distance the country from the EU – as the newly introduced quotas significantly limit mobility within the continent – remains a problem. In their commentaries on the outcome of the Swiss referendum, both European Parliament president Martin Schulz and European Commission president José Manuel Barroso emphasized that the right to free movement within Europe is not up for debate.

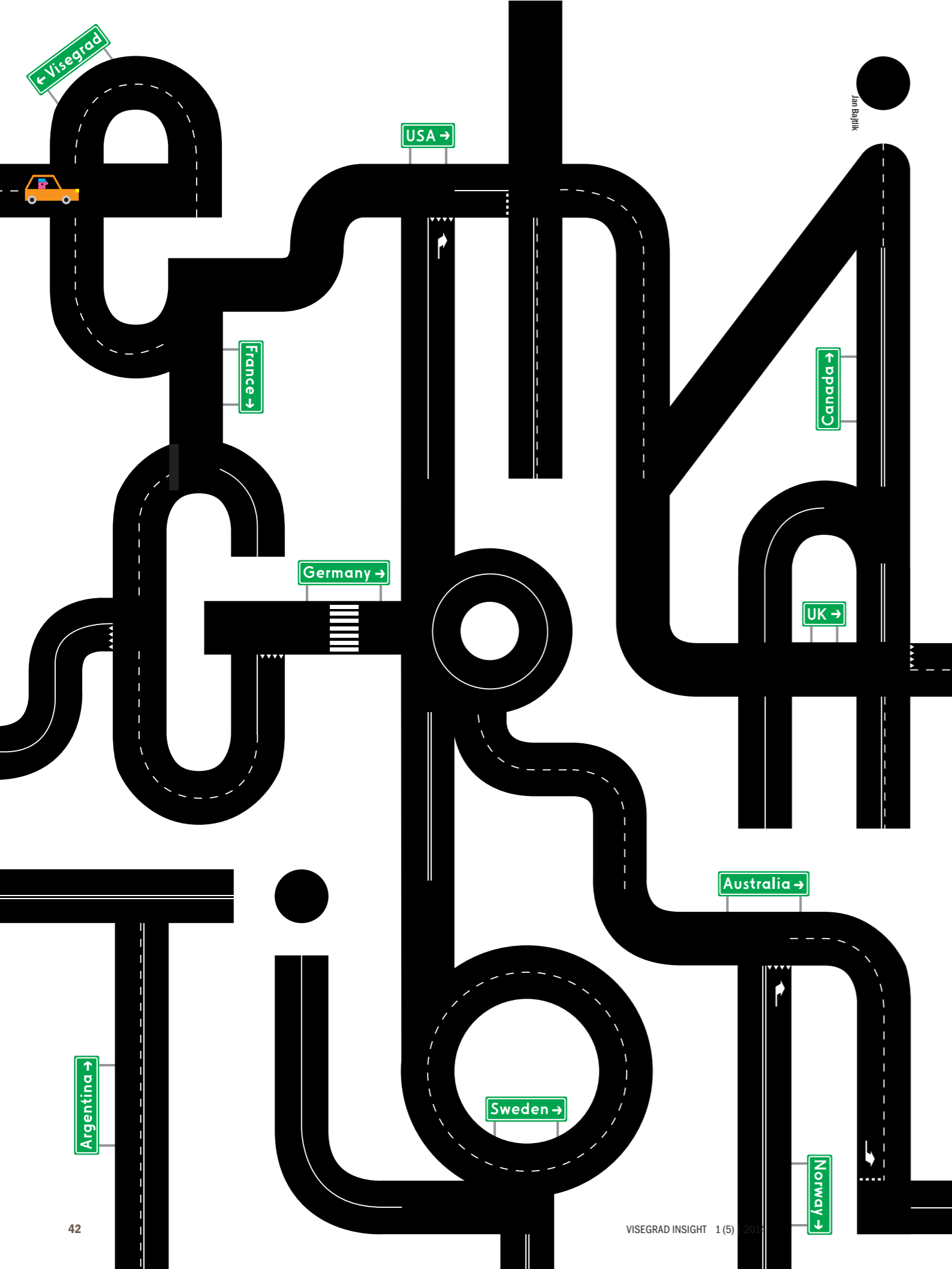
The Visegrad Four countries have released a joint statement in reaction to the proposed British anti-migration measures (arguing that it represents a “selective approach” to core EU freedoms) aimed at limiting social benefits for Bulgarian and Romanian immigrants. “Free movement of people is a cornerstone of EU integration – an indispensable functional building block of a truly integrated Single Market,” expressed the foreign ministers of Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary. Echoing remarks stated by the European Commission, V4 minis-

ters argued that the migrant forces from newly-introduced countries would boost the economies of the host countries, as “they are younger and economically more active than the average British workforce; they also contribute to the UK national revenues far in excess of the social benefits they use.”

On the eve of the European Parliamentary elections, the political situation is tense, as divisions within the EU become more evident, concretely those based on migration fears on the one hand and the economic advantages of higher mobility on the other. At the top level of EU institutions in Brussels, people are sharing opinions in which they foresee “populists, xenophobes, extremists, fascists” gaining even as much as 30% of seats in the next parliament. Eurosceptic parties, or those actively committed to paralyzing EU policy-making (including withdrawal from the single currency), are expected to achieve considerable results in countries such as Greece, Austria, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Hungary, and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, while Nigel Farage's UK Independence Party is being widely considered as the possible winner of European elections in Britain.

The growing European public sphere means that the relationship between local politics and, overall, cross-European policy-making is more relevant than ever before. The political and social discussions that followed the Lampedusa tragedy have gained wide media coverage, spilling over to other countries, proving that the border between national and European (transnational) politics are beginning to blur. The May 2014 elections will certainly prove to be a major turning point, as heated debates on crucial issues such as the freedom of movement and cross-border migration are shaping the political programs of competing parties. Representatives of conservative factions are gaining more and more popularity among European voters by feeding on growing euroscepticism, most prominently among citizens of Western European states, with success partly attributed to the world economic crisis. The shape of the future EU Parliament will without doubt influence Europe's stance on migration, which is still envisioned as the non-negotiable right of every European citizen.

The author is a cultural anthropologist and Americanist and a PhD student at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Warsaw.



new EUROPEANS

Emigration flows from the 19th century to the present day

GERTRUDA GECAITE

Global transformations starting in the 19th century have gone hand in hand with mass migration, which has been a significant part of modern world history. Although the migration flows have taken various directions, almost two-thirds of emigrants chose the United States, while the rest went to Australia, Canada, Argentina, and some to Western Europe. The rise of migration from Europe to the New World has had profound impact on the global economy, societal well-being, and population transfer. The 20th century marked the process of cultural intermingling not only overseas but also within Europe, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The main driving force behind emigration in the 19th and 20th centuries was not only the search for economic well-being, but also political repression and ethnic persecution.

In the 21st century, cultural diversity has evolved not only through exchange of labor force, filling labor shortages, and contribution to countries' prospects, but also through the melting pot phenomenon, particularly in Europe. In Europe, fertility rates among natives are decreasing, cultural diversity brings conflict, sending countries are losing their human capital, and there is a relatively low level of return migration. Although the labor force circulation of the 19th century has persisted, today it presents challenges of maintaining the European population, curbing cultural differences, and sustaining the welfare system.

WAVES OF MIGRATION

European migrants were determined to settle down primarily in America. For instance, since the middle of the 19th century, the average number of emigrants had been around 300,000 per year, while already at the beginning of the 21st century they numbered over a million a year. According to the National Bureau of Economic Research data, the second decade of the 20th century marked a significant decline in migrants due to U.S. quotas.

Some scholars oppose the explanation that restrictive policies introduced by the U.S. government led to a decreasing number of migrants. According to them, the concept of migration is better understood by keeping in mind its political and economic context, and other processes over a certain period of time. With regard to U.S. quotas, the House of Representatives introduced the Immigration Act (in early 1924) as a tool to monitor the uncontrolled stream of migrants, and put restrictive quotas on newcomers to filter out those who might stay in the U.S. Moreover, restrictions were placed on immigration visas according to which only two percent of the total number of applicants of each nationality were granted visas to settle down in the U.S.

Large numbers of people, particularly from Transylvania including ethnic Hungarians, also emigrated to the U.S. after the First World War. Migration flows from Romania were thus strongly linked to ethnic minorities until the early 1990s. During the Communist era, German, Hungarian, Jewish, and Greek minorities felt ethnically discriminated and moved to

other countries with which they had historical ties (Israel, Hungary, and Germany). An ineffectual political system under Soviet turmoil was another reason to leave Romania. It is also significant to note that although the regime kept emigration under control, ethnic minorities of Jews, Germans, and Hungarians were sponsored to emigrate. For instance, after the Second World War, the communist authorities were allowed to sell Romanian citizens of Jewish and German origin to Israel, the U.S., and West Germany. Under the Ceaușescu regime, a deal was often made in which minorities brought financial profit to Romania, and were in exchange provided with passports and visas. As has been revealed in the memoirs of a number of security officers, the sum for one person varied from 15,000 to 250,000 US dollars, depending on their education level, age, and professional achievements (Suciu 2010). This practice was so profitable that the General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party applied the same tactics to those of German descent. This policy had a clear goal: to create a homogenous Romanian society. Meanwhile, ethnic Hungarians were in a different position. They crossed the border illegally and settled down in Hungary without residence permits. This kind of migration was not accepted by the Romanian authorities, which feared the outcome of a massive emigration and its impact on the country's reputation. Since the 1930s and 1940s, however, the tendency toward free migration has slowly come to an end.

Other significant countries with a high emigration rate include the Baltic states, particularly Latvia and Lithuania. Although emigration from the Baltic states is less visible due to its small populations, it had a huge impact on other countries' cultural and intellectual survival. For instance, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a huge wave of Lithuanian emigrants (around 300,000) headed to the U.S. It is ultimately difficult to document the precise number of emigrants due to poor record-keeping, as Lithuanians were not seen as belonging to a separate nation and were often counted as Polish or Russian. An even greater number of Lithuanians emigrated to the U.S. to escape the Soviet reoccupation of Lithuania. Educated leaders and professionals believed not to come back, therefore, many sought just permanent stay in America.

The second wave refers to intra-European migration. The fall of the Ottoman Empire led to an influx of Muslims from the Balkan states to Turkey and northwestern Europe (France, Germany, UK, and the Benelux countries). At the same time, Christian minorities left Turkey. A few decades later, there was migration from poor countries in Europe to richer ones such as France, Germany, and Great Britain, motivated by their desire to improve economic prosperity and the demand for the labor force to achieve it. The main flow of people was from southern Europe to northwestern Europe, particularly from Portugal, Italy, Ireland, and Finland to the UK and Sweden. In the 1960s and early 1970s, migration expanded from the former colonial regions such as India, Sub-Saharan, and the Caribbean to the UK, France, and the Netherlands to fill labor market demands for unskilled workers. People therefore settled down in industrial areas that provided work opportunities.

The early 1970s marked a slowdown in migration flow to Western Europe due to the global oil crisis that hit the world hard. It took some time to restore the economic surge that again resulted in a new wave of migration. Western Europe and the Scandinavian countries managed to do so and those

regions became very multicultural – Iraqis and Afghans in Denmark, Algerians and Moroccans in France, Poles and Turks in Germany, Russians in Finland, Albanians and Romanians in Italy, and Indians and Pakistanis in Great Britain. Moreover, after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, emigration from transition countries such as Poland and Romania increased considerably. In terms of migratory movement within Europe, living conditions have improved and it has become more or less similar among EU countries. Therefore, some countries have shifted from sending to host countries.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, migration has occurred within Europe when people moved from east to west: there was a flow of Russians emigrating to Ukraine and Kazakhstan after the fall of communism, while Ukrainians left for Germany, the U.S., and Israel, and Romanians mostly headed for Germany. Immigration to the EU has thus increased significantly since the 1980s and even exceeded that of the U.S. While a few decades earlier, workers without legal permission to enter other countries were welcomed for the very simple reason that there was a demand for labor force. It seems that outflow of migrants will be surpassed by the influx of illegal migrants, which has already become a concern for Southern and Eastern Europe. For instance, in the 1990s and 2000s, European governments were preoccupied by issues such as the Schengen Area and development of the single market, and their impact on migrants' integration. It was believed that a common EU migration policy would be the solution. Illegal migration in Europe has been strongly influenced by enlargement of the EU. Open borders led to a flow of people escaping the economic recession and political turmoil in their home countries, particularly since the 1990s. According to Population Reference Bureau data from 2013, the population in Europe has increased from around 370 million people in 1960 to more than 750 million. The more newcomers are accepted, the more Europe must struggle and take responsibility to deal with the consequences.

In the 1990s, thousands of Romanians, Bulgarians, and Ukrainians migrated to countries such as the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary in search of job opportunities. They initially constituted an unskilled labor force that was later joined by migrants with work contracts from China (mostly to the Czech Republic and Hungary) and Vietnam (to Poland and the Czech Republic). With regard to migrants from Asian and non-EU countries, socio-cultural differences led to a diverse integration model. Meanwhile, highly-skilled workers from Western Europe moved to the Visegrad Group countries; however, their stays were temporary, which did not encourage integration. The Central and Eastern European Migration Review (2013) shows that Hungary and the Czech Republic maintain a significantly low level of immigration, while Poland has the tendency to switch from a typical emigration country to a net immigration country. This is clear from Poland's migration balance, which had a relatively high emigration level from the early 1990s to 2006, but has since 2009 exhibited a balance in emigration and immigration flows.

Since EU enlargement in 2004, Poland has been the country with the largest emigration flow among CEE countries, due to Poland's population and its demographic potential. In 2004-2007 it was estimated that over one million Poles went abroad due to job opportunities. The most frequent destinations were Great Britain, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, France, and

Norway. What is more, according to Polish Census data in 2011, Poles constituted the third largest resident group in the U.S., and a smaller group in Canada and Australia.

WHAT ARE THE MOTIVES FOR EMIGRATION?

The objectives of migration vary in terms of time, place, as well as other external and internal elements, and for centuries the flow of migration has been shaped by different economic and social factors. The main driving forces behind migration can be attributed to both negative and positive factors. Harsh conditions such as poverty, a lack of employment possibilities, religious, political, and ethnical persecution, and famine all encourage people to emigrate. On the other hand there was a push for new land to cultivate (most of these migrants were farmers from Europe) and to settle down in urban areas at the beginning of the 19th century, which constituted an escape plan for European emigrants.

According to a report by Danielle Leclercq (1999), Europe at that time was suffering from overpopulation in rural areas such as Silesia, Ireland, and Westphalia, which encouraged mass emigration of agricultural and industrial workers. What is more, the agricultural depression evolved into the potato blight in Ireland and Pebrine Disease infecting vineyards in France, among others, creating the necessity to move elsewhere. Moreover, new discoveries of resources such as gold in North America and Australia accelerated masses of migrants seeking a better life. However, not only were far-removed places (from Europe to America) chosen as emigration destinations, but also nearby countries. The first group of workers in German and French industrial areas consisted of Poles and Italians, for instance. Relatively cheap transportation allowed workers to settle down close to their homelands, thus avoiding emigration overseas. Demographic shift also played a crucial role in stimulating migration. The mortality rate of children declined, in turn mobilizing young people to contribute to the migration boom, supported in part by remittances from family members overseas.

It is also significant to note that migration has been used as a force to move people to certain places and isolate them. The examples of the deportation of the Lithuanian and Polish

intelligentsia as political enemies to Siberia, or the sending of British prisoners to Australia demonstrate the use of migration in excluding certain groups of people. Pogroms have also played a role, with mass violence against certain ethnic or religious groups, or even classes, although usually against Jews. According to John Klier (2010), professor of Modern Jewish History at University College London, this happened at different times, for instance, during the first Odessa pogrom in 1821, Jews were accused of sympathizing with the Ottoman authorities, while even earlier in 1648 Jews were targeted as religious enemies during the Cossack uprising against the Poles. During times of political upheaval and warfare, Jews were scapegoated and became "others." Although ideology played a crucial role in pogroms, violence and brutality were caused by inhumane war and greed. Moreover, the pogroms were centrally organized by the government itself, which wanted to expel a certain class of people. According to Yehuda Slutsky (2008), it is impossible to assess the number of victims of pogroms during wars. Partial data reveals that 887 major and 349 minor pogroms have occurred since the 19th century. Many people have lived in fear, many have been killed, while only some have managed to survive.

So far, no investigation has been conducted to analyze the impact of migrants forced to return to their country of origin. The phenomenon of forced migration may also be perceived as the result of the human decision to choose political refugeehood and escape Nazi and Bolshevik political repression. However, as sociologist Stephen Castles notes, forced migration today refers not only to asylum seekers or refugees, but also to people who have left their countries due to natural disasters or because they became victims of human trafficking and the sex industry. The scale of forced migration is vast and has led to demographic, economic, and cultural challenges that Europe has had to address. Although migration is driven by various inner and external factors and has gone through different historical periods, it has consistently been bound to peoples' desire to find a safe place to live.

The author graduated in social sciences from Vilnius University.

SAVE THE DATE



The essential global forum for the dialogue on freedom, democracy and human rights.



forum2000.cz

18th FORUM 2000 Conference

October 12–14, 2014, Prague
October 15, 2014, Brno, Ostrava, Bratislava, Budapest, Krakow

The conference is open to public upon registration.



facebook.com/forum.2000

18. konference FORUM 2000

12.–14. října 2014, Praha
15. října 2014, Brno, Ostrava, Bratislava, Budapešť, Krakov

Konference je otevřena pro veřejnost po předchozí registraci.



twitter.com/forum_2000



CHERRY PICKING FOR A HUNGRY EUROPE

INTERVIEW WITH **ATTILA MELEGH**,
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT CORVINUS UNIVERSITY

CONDUCTED BY MÁTÉ ZOMBORY

Currently the manager of an international project on migration for eight countries, Attila Melegh insists on looking at migration from a global perspective in discussing the European Union's relationship to migration. What is Europe like compared with other migratory systems? What are the main tendencies on the continent? What is the situation in the V4 countries? How to best evaluate existing policies toward immigrants given the growing economic and social need for labor in Europe?

How would you describe the position of the EU in global migration flows?

The first important thing is that the global migration system really is global. Al-

though the whole world participates in it, the perception of the European public is that everything is about Europe, and in this respect it's completely wrong. Large migration flows and migration stocks (that is, foreign-born or foreign citizen population residing in a country) can be observed outside Europe and throughout the world. Just to name some: the North American system is one of the largest, the system of the Gulf countries is also expansive, and there are also dramatic migratory movements within Africa – for example, there was a civil war in North Africa in 2010-2011, during which 25,000 people appeared in Italy, first in Lampedusa. They later continued their journey and even got as far as France. At the same time, around one million migrants left North Africa for other destinations. So it is crucial to understand that it is not only Europe that is “struggling” with migration.

Another important thing is that the EU is divided. It was an overall, out-migrant region until the 1950s; now it is an immigrant region, which doesn't mean that there are no regions that are completely out-migrant regions or immigrant regions within Europe (for reasons of history and economic hierarchy). As a rule the EU15 is receiving people. It is not homogenous. Furthermore, the EU also receives a large number of migrants from so-called third countries, including North Africa, Latin America, and from the Indian subcontinent.

Finally, it is also important to clarify that the EU basically looks at migration from two completely different perspectives. To the outside, it's a very conservative force: it persists in the notion that it can select and control immigration. In the context of global political discussions, the EU is very conservative – sometimes

I would even say ultraconservative – with regard to illegal migrants, for instance, people without citizenship. At the same time, inside Europe, the EU is a developing system that is trying to build up some security for immigrants, and it is liberalizing the flow of people within its borders. What makes this picture even more complicated is that there's no such a thing as EU migration policy! There are basically only a few matters on which EU leaders agree, and the rest is – at least in theory – up to the nation states. So the EU is a very complicated animal in this respect.

How would you describe migration inside the EU? What kind of flows can be identified?

The problem is what kinds of flows to identify? Flow data is very problematic for many reasons. Some experts say that the published flow data is completely unreli-

able. We can speak of some of the major directions, and also of the resident populations in various parts of Europe. The Polish-German direction is, and has always been, a very important one. Also, the last census found around 600,000 Polish residents in the UK (including Scotland). This is one very important direction in which the Visegrad countries are involved. The other – Romania and Bulgaria, most importantly from Romania toward southern Europe, mainly Italy – does not actually affect the Visegrad region that much. In Italy, the number of Romanian residents went up to more than 600,000-700,000, very suddenly, for various reasons. I would even say that the crisis has not changed this pattern very much. Bulgaria has also been sending out huge number of migrants toward Turkey and Spain. Turning to the Visegrad countries, Hungary has a relatively low intensity of out-migration, which, however, has been exponentially increasing from a very low level since EU accession. The main targets for Hungary are of course Austria and Germany, and now the UK is also rising as the third most important destination country. Slovakia is of course important in Austria, Germany, and in the UK as well. Relatively speaking, the out-migrant numbers are not too high in these countries. The Czech Republic is the one country that is actually showing a rather different pattern: it has become an immigrant country; it doesn't send people abroad on a massive scale. The Czech labor market is surely an important issue here, because it is better than those of the others. It's been following a different trajectory – it has been more urban, more industrial, it's quite a different story. In general, it is long-term historical structures and relationships that matter.

Can we speak of the Central Eastern European countries as destination countries?

Yes. For various groups we are targets. Poland is receiving very few; it may be that it actually has the lowest level of immigration among all the EU countries. The overall stock of resident foreign citizens is below 0.5% of the total population, which is very low – this small group is mainly comprised of people from Ukraine. Some Caucasian countries and Vietnam are important. The Czech Republic is different; it's attractive, with around 4% of the total population consisting of resident foreign citizens. Of course they still have quite a few people from Slovakia, but they have

immigrants from Russia, Ukraine, and Vietnam. Vietnam is very important in the Czech Republic.

How do you explain this?

Under state socialism, many Vietnamese students appeared in these countries and were network starters, and all neighboring countries, including Hungary, actually attracted Vietnamese labor! So, for example, in the mid-1980s, Hungary (and also Czechoslovakia) had physical workers from Vietnam. I think this is a very important relationship; Vietnam is not a small country. We are talking about more than 80 million people with a booming economy right now, which actually means that people can increasingly afford out-migration and have the opportunity to establish links. Slovakia attracts people from Ukraine and also some from Vietnam, but once again, the rate is not that high. Hungary primarily has links to neighboring territories where Hungarians live: mainly Ukraine, Romania, and Serbia. This pattern has been dominant but is actually declining in some ways, not only because these people are receiving Hungarian citizenship, but also because migrants do not come here anymore. It isn't worth coming here. They go along with Romanian migrant networks to southern Europe, to Italy. Hungary receives quite a number of Chinese citizens, and also Russians. Less people have come from Slovakia, mainly because the two countries are equally developed, or because Slovakia has even taken over Hungary in terms of GDP/capita. Within the EU, Hungary receives quite a few people from Germany; so German citizens also live here, for highly varied economic reasons. In terms of immigration intensity, however, these countries show rather low figures, compared to the EU15 countries or even Austria, if you look at the whole region. Austria sends out many out-migrants, but receives even more immigrants.

What economic role do outgoing migrants play in this region? How much money do they send to their families?

We are talking about relatively small numbers. The Visegrad countries do not show a pattern characteristic of countries such as Moldova and Tajikistan, or even Romania and Bulgaria, where the remittances, as they are known, can climb as high as 30% of the total GDP. In the Visegrad countries, they are somewhere between 1-2%. We don't know the exact figures as

the statistics are very unreliable (rough estimates), as nobody can really do a survey and ask these people directly. Just to clarify: to do surveys on out-migration is a very complicated exercise. People have little trust, they're afraid of providing information that might worsen their position. But research has shown that the former socialist countries' dependency on remittances has increased since the 1990s.

Can we say that the majority of outgoing migrants from this region is leaving for economic reasons?

With regard to the labor market, the collapse of state socialism meant that very high labor force participation rates fell radically and dramatically to very low levels as a result of globalization. In migration theory, scholars say that when world capitalism intervenes in countries less integrated into the system, it leads to huge out-migration. This intervention leads to very bad labor market figures, and so it was absolutely predictable that people would start looking around for opportunities. Why different Central Eastern European countries have behaved differently in this way is a very good question. The Poles started early, the Czechs never really did, but we have already noted that the Czech labor market has also been doing better; Slovaks also waited for some time, and the Hungarians waited even longer. But now everybody is taking part, with the sole exception of the Czech Republic. That was predictable. Unfortunately, I think this euro-world capitalism is not about improving labor market figures, which means that this trend will continue; we are definitely going to live in an area with a higher intensity of migration and we have to prepare for that, and we have to develop our policies to take current developments in migration into account.

Does this mean that there is no significant migration between the V4 countries, that the direction is mainly East-West?

Actually, this is a very important thing to mention. Slovakia has produced migrants for Hungary, but this was to do with the Hungarian minority living there. Of course, migration was considerable between the Czechs and Slovaks for historical reasons, and it still exists. However, migration is not that significant between Poland and the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia, and Poland and Hungary. In general, migration has decreased among these countries since the fall of state so-

cialism. Nonetheless, I wouldn't say that it is over. When we look at the demographic trends and the labor market figures, it is obvious that the region will need more migrants, despite whatever the public thinks. I think sooner or later, there will be a major investment problem here and there will be an increasing need for a labor force. Why would the extremely global capital invest here, if there is not enough usable labor?

There are various fears about mass migration from Eastern Europe to Western countries, and we have recently heard

T H E R E ' S N O S U C H A T H I N G A S E U M I G R A T I O N P O L I C Y !



Miklós Székely

the announcement of British prime minister David Cameron on the restriction of immigration to the UK. If we look at the data, do they support these fears?

Even the census shows that there's a relatively big immigrant population in the UK, but the situation is somewhat more complicated for a number of reasons. I can provide various arguments. Firstly, when Eastern Europe was pushed to change its economic system, and when it found itself in subsequent labor market scenarios, the British government and the British capital promoted that transformation. Now that the UK is seeing people come as a consequence of the integration of these

economies into the EU, it should not come as a surprise, as it happened with the active support of the British government. Secondly, European economies are not competitive enough, mainly because of increasing capital costs and very high labor costs. For the last thirty years, at least, we have seen the emergence of the global market in some sense, in which comparative advantage started to work. Previously, the West was able to avoid this huge competition from outside. Now, comparative advantage is working: labor in China, India, and Bangladesh produces the goods

harness the issue of immigration. The British are not opposed to skilled Polish workers; no, they want to avoid certain kinds of immigrants. They are rather selective in choosing their labor force. Cherry picking is the primary technique: getting the best and paying the least for it. But the EU is a strong counterforce in this. So, these are five reasons why border closure is not going to happen.

You said that European countries and the EU itself would need people in the future, so migration is necessary in that sense. But we hear many speeches, mainly political, saying that migrants cause problems. Can you imagine there being another kind of perspective on migrants, one that doesn't consider them a problem?

I think that in Europe, where they say negative things about immigrants while using their labor, it's going to remain the case as long as migrants keep coming. As soon as they stop, politicians will get into trouble. That would be my answer. Europe is far more hypocritical with regard to migrants than other regions. I'm not saying that migrants have a good life outside Europe. Migrants suffer in the Gulf States, in Africa, and in Latin America, to such an extent that readers can hardly imagine! And in Europe they don't suffer that much. But one thing is not going to change: the European public is against immigration for one good reason, because Europe is losing its economic positions.

Are there examples of countries in which the population feels positively toward migrants?

There are some countries even within Europe. Austria and Finland are far more positive than others. Look at the United States, which is also restrictive, don't misunderstand me, but from time to time, acknowledges that immigration is what it needs and lives on; and so it changes the legal regulations and legalizes millions of "illegals." Global politics is also becoming more positive. The development of international law demonstrates this very well: the UN is fighting hard to even settle the rights of illegal immigrants. These developments are welcome and the EU should facilitate this process.

The author is a sociologist, a research fellow at the Centre for Social Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and an editor of *Visegrad Insight*.

IN DEFENSE OF DECADENT EUROPE

IVAN KRASTEV

Raymond Aron's book *In Defense of Decadent Europe* was published in 1977. It was a time of pervasive pessimism and doubt about the future of both democracy and Europe. European economies had been knocked down by the 1973 energy crisis. The student movements of the 1960s and the wave of terrorism that followed in countries like West Germany and Italy shattered European societies. In general, the 1970s seemed a crossroads of blind alleys to their contemporaries. Europe's role in world politics was in decline.

Re-reading Aron's book in 2014 gives us a better sense of the current crisis. It suggests that we have been here before but it also warns that the fact that we survived then does not guarantee that we will survive today, because Aron's defense of Europe is not a book about Europe but about the delusions of Marxism, the intrinsic instability of the communist regimes, and the tendency of European intellectuals to fall in love with apocalyptic self-criticism. So Aron was right that democratic capitalism and not Soviet communism is the future of the world. Now, when communism is history, however, how should we write in defense of decadent Europe?

The European Union no longer exists, at least not as we know it. All of the pillars that served to build and justify the existence of the EU have collapsed.

A survey of German secondary school students in the 14-16 age bracket, which was published a little over a year

ago, showed that a third of these young people did not know who Adolf Hitler was, and 40% were convinced that human rights had been respected to an equal degree by every German government since 1933. This in no way implies that there is nostalgia for fascism in Germany. No, it simply means that we now have to contend with a generation that has nothing to do with this history. Today, the conviction that the EU continues to derive legitimacy from its roots in the war is an illusion.

Today, the EU does not have – and cannot have – an enemy that can justify its existence in the same manner as the post-1949 USSR did.

The third pillar that has crumbled is prosperity. The EU continues to be very rich – even if this observation does not apply to all its member states; however, 60% of Europeans believe that their children will not live as well as they do.

Another source of legitimacy was a belief in convergence, which led poor countries joining the EU to expect that they would progressively acquire advantages in tune with membership of a rich man's club. This still had some basis in fact a few years ago, but today, if the economic forecasts for the next ten years are to be believed, a country like Greece is likely to remain as poor in comparison to Germany as it was on the day of its accession to the EU.

So, a defense of decadent Europe is only possible on the field of ideas, and here is the real question, one that Marcin Król has continually addressed in the last decade: Why has the spread of democracy in Europe made European intellec-

tuals (with some exceptions) unable to think through the dilemmas of modern democracies? Why did Europe surrender its universalistic appeal?

What until just yesterday seemed universally applicable in the European experience, begins to look exceptional today. Even a passing glance at China, India, and Russia, not to speak of the vast reaches of the Muslim world, makes clear that both ethnic nationalism and religion remain major ideological driving forces shaping global politics. Postmodern post-nationalism and secularism are making Europe different from the rest of the world, not making the rest of the world more like Europe.

In the world's rising ideological cycle, liberalism is in retreat. Indeed, ethnic nationalism and religion are not only ever more present in the non-European world,

they are also more present within Europe itself. Brussels – the capital of the EU – is very different in spirit from Brussels – the capital of Belgium. The former is in love with diversity and multiculturalism; the latter is witnessing the rise of symbolic politics and the return of the ghost of ethnically driven partition. The crisis has put post-national politics on trial. It has evoked collective national experiences and revived national narratives long thought shut-up in metaphorical archives.

We live in Europe different from the one described by Aron. We must, therefore, face the question of we want to defend it and how. So far the question remains open.

The author is the Chairman of the Centre for Liberal Strategies in Sofia, and permanent fellow at the IWM Institute of Human Sciences in Vienna.

▼ Balaklava, Crimea, Ukraine, March 1, 2014.
A Ukrainian man in front of Russian soldiers blocking a Ukrainian military base.



ANTON FEDKO / PAP / EPA

TOLERANCE REQUIRES COMPETITIVENESS

MADANIE SANNNUM-LAUTEN/APP/EAST NEWS

President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso, President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy and President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz attend a press conference in Oslo, on 9 December, 2012 where they are to receive the 2012 Peace Nobel Prize attributed to the EU.

HYWEL CERI JONES

In thinking about the theme of tolerance, I was reminded of a story I heard of two priests living in Ireland. They lived in the same village. Both of them had been preaching their own version of Christianity for many, many years and they were in caught up in a deadly rivalry. As their careers were both about to end, one of them went up to the other and looking at him with great suspicion in his eyes said: "It is time that we shook hands. I think that after all these years we have to acknowledge that we have both been doing the Lord's work in the Lord's vineyard, each of us in our own way." And the other priest replied: "Yes, as you say, you in your way and I in God's."

I had the privilege during my European career to be actively engaged throughout the 1990s in the peace and reconciliation initiative in Northern Ireland, witnessing on the ground the determination of previously bitter opponents to build bridges of new trust, to mobilize local communities and to tackle the problems of exclusion and alienation, while opening up more opportunities for jobs and employment. Ex-prisoners from both sides of the divide were often the leaders of these initiatives, serving as important role models in setting aside bitter hatred and distrust and attracting others to follow them on the pathways to reconciliation. I saw them building new friendships, surprising friendships.

I would like to point out some of the ideas and messages that I have taken from this moving experience, both as a participant and an observer of the peace process in the north of Ireland. Firstly, and this was echoed by a couple of the earlier speakers, the local level of action is absolutely crucial. People do not live nationally, or internationally, or at the European level, they live in their local communities, and mutual respect and tolerance has to be worked at, worked hard at, at the local level. Throughout my experience of managing European social and educational programs, I have seen time and time again the power of locally based initiatives to attack problems of deprivation, poverty and prejudice in ways which draw on the very specific strengths and talents of the community involved, and which can therefore target and deliver practical results far beyond the expectations of national, let alone international, politicians.

The commitment and the engagement of citizens locally can drive the search for solutions that cut much more easily across the compartmentalized boundaries of departments – education, social, cultural, economic, and employment depart-

ments, which at the national level often suffer from inadequate cooperation, indeed often inadequate coordination. And I agree in this sense that this derives from the problem our opening speaker talked about this morning, which is the fragmentation of knowledge, which is separated in the way we organize our work in different spheres. This more visible dynamic of locally based initiatives, of which there are now hundreds, perhaps thousands, of examples across Europe and in other parts of the world, provides a much more effective framework to construct multi-dimensional efforts, intersectoral if you like, to combat deprivation, disadvantage, and discrimination. Employers, trade unions, voluntary bodies, and civil society, in the broader sense, can often find ways to cut through the complexity of negotiation processes, so evident at the national level, as well as the bureaucratic red tape that often characterizes it.

The role of local and regional levels has grown in significance. I feel this very strongly coming from Wales. Despite and indeed because of the forces of globalization, economic initiatives have become more widely spread, with the explosion of decentralized networks and the "Think Global, Act Local" message, which has been driving new alliances with entrepreneurs and social innovators activating their communities both socially and economically. Looking back on the experience in Northern Ireland, power and commitment at the local level was crucial, but it is also crucial to recognize the significant contribution of the European Union – working with the Irish and UK governments, of course, as a "neutral" broker of the reconciliation process, but also as a major founder of projects over many years. And the key point I want to make is that no matter what you do at the local level, you need a framework of law to which you can refer, and you also need a clear policy framework to accompany and reflect those laws.

The financial help that the EU gave to the peace and reconciliation initiative in Northern Ireland played an important part, the massive injection of structural funds was, to my mind however, only one of the factors that contributed to the successful transition in the north of Ireland, to the stability, greater trust, and cooperation that we now enjoy in the two parts of the island, north and south. It was President Jacques Delors, in the build-up of the EU, who believed that there should be a political balance between the benefits deriving from the internal market – the biggest such market in the world – and commitment to a European policy of environmental and social cohesion.

Cohesion meant the commitment that all corners, every part of the EU, should share in the economic benefits that would derive from the internal market, an instrument of solidarity reflecting shared European values.

But equally important was the overarching legal framework that the EU has developed, with the obligations for member states to observe the European Charter of Fundamental Rights and also to respect all the legislative developments that have taken place, particularly in the last twenty-five years, especially in areas like equal rights for women and men in all spheres of life.

The negotiations taking place in Brussels on the future regulations of the EU structural funds for the 2014-2020 period are of great importance, particularly in Poland.

What is at stake, for me anyway, in particular? Apart from the controversial discussion on the size of the EU budget in the Polish press (and therefore consequences for the Erasmus budget, by the way), I am most concerned that the new EU regulations empower civil society to be a partner in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the funds when they are delivered to Poland and the other countries. Without the active, clear, and visible participation of civil society, the exercise will simply not have credibility. Today, in our opening session this morning, the mayor also referred to this.

Across most of Europe we can see our societies in the grip of increasing unemployment, especially among vast numbers of young people, many of whom, no matter how well qualified, are failing to gain a foothold in the world of work. The Eurozone crisis, the insatiable greed of banks, and global economic fragility have all wrought havoc on the fabric of our societies. The current recession in Europe and the failure to trigger growth and jobs, whilst prioritizing deficit reduction, starkly highlight the increasing gap between the "haves" and the "have nots." The financial cuts being introduced in most European countries and in other parts of the world to reduce budget deficits are hammering the public services provided in Europe, especially for the most vulnerable, the disadvantaged, and the disabled.

What is the result? We can see it – the profound insecurity felt by millions of families in our different countries is increasingly leading to protests, strikes, turbulence, and misery. People are asking: what are the prospects in this world now, for our children, our young people? And of course this mood of growing insecurity and incomprehension of the failure to rein in and control the banking sector – I do not want to pick on it exclusively, but it must be named – is matched by growing disillusionment with political parties and politicians, and a growing lack of trust in their capacity to handle the crises both in the short, and especially in the longer, term. The seedbed for extremist parties, both right and left, for discriminatory actions against immigrant and migrant families, and indeed against members of the indigenous population, are all too evident in the media and in our streets. Let's look at the specific case of the Roma populations in Europe. There are twelve to fourteen million Roma peoples across Europe, living at the bottom of the pile in absolutely desperate conditions exacerbated by the crises all around us.

What is the result? This mass structural unemployment situation is splitting European society into two. For many now, unemployment is a permanent state, yet what really matters to people is jobs. Jobs now, today, and for the future. Without people at work, with significantly higher rates of unemployment,

especially for women, we cannot achieve the economic bedrock to fund larger, more extensive systems of care and protection for people and to cope with the millions of pensioners living longer, which has transformed the demographic situation across Europe. This is also true in other parts of the world.

In a word, how can the historic, unwritten contract between the generations, the young and the older, be sustained? The very basis of the social models and welfare systems we have painstakingly built up in Europe over the last century are at risk. Poverty and economic and social exclusion are acting as triggers, unleashing anger, frustration, and intolerance, both on the part of those in difficulty and at risk, but also on the part of mainstream society.

Let me be clear then: I believe we cannot build a tolerant, happy, and prosperous society without profitable business, nor can we build a competitive economy in a social wasteland. This is the message we all need to send strongly to the politicians who are grappling with the serious difficulties we are all facing, with the social and economic agenda of our times. The overall cohesiveness of our societies, the quality of our education and training systems, the ways in which we look after the interests of vulnerable groups, and the manner in which we shape the relationship between self-improvement, work, prosperity, social justice, and fundamental rights across the board, hold real meaning for all people. These, taken together, are essential ingredients in building economic competitiveness, but economic and social policies must go hand-in-hand.

A final word: the decision by the Nobel Prize Committee to award the 2012 peace prize to the EU was greeted in the media, especially in the UK (as ever) with a mixed response. Some commentators recognize the validity of the case. They applaud the European bulwark, which has guaranteed not only peace, but also huge areas of cooperation through the process of sharing sovereignty since 1957. Other commentators have seized on the present economic crisis, especially the Eurozone troubles and the Greek case, to question the wisdom of the Nobel Committee and, certainly in the UK, to question the relevance of the peace motive as the *raison d'être* of the EU today.

I am not, and never have been, a starry-eyed advocate of the EU. I worked in the European Commission and I enjoyed it. The EU is, without doubt, an imperfect, incomplete construction. But when taken in the context of the overall global scene, I am positive that the framework that has been built up from European law and practice has contributed massively to progress of our member states to tackle equality, fundamental rights, and anti-discrimination. These are core values, core principles, which must underpin our shared, European-wide commitment to peace and reconciliation. In that sense, too, in the absence of effective global architecture to address the challenges the world faces, I am relieved that despite its ups and downs, the EU can still serve as a beacon in the world, pointing the way forward to a better future for us all, with a shared commitment to combat negative forms of exclusion, prejudice, and intolerance.

The author is the former director of the European Commission's Task Force for Education, Training, and Human Resources at the European Commission, and formerly director general of the Directorate General for Employment, Social Policy, and Industrial Relations of the European Commission, also responsible for the European Social Fund.



POLAND TODAY
Internationally engaged

CONFERENCE
& COCKTAIL PARTY

Poland Transformed

28 May 2014 | Endorfina Foksal | ul. Foksal 2, Warsaw

Celebrating
25 years
of economic transformation

How unleashing business helped write
Europe's biggest economic success story.

Join **key figures** from the domestic and international
business community & 50 leading international journalists,
including Edward Lucas, Senior Editor of The Economist,
and discover what the past has to teach us
about the future.

www.poland-today.pl

CONTENT
PARTNER

MEDIA
PARTNER

Under the Patronage of the President of the Republic
of Poland, Bronisław Komorowski. 25 years of freedom.



“THE VILLAGE WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN”

COEXISTENCE IN NORTHERN HUNGARY

CECÍLIA KOVAI

With Eastern European accession to the European Union in 2004 and 2007, a new, formerly less relevant issue arose in the European public sphere: the issue of “the Gypsy.” This was due to migration from Eastern Europe to Western Europe and the unresolved social, economic, and political conflicts within the newly joined states. The political scandals that erupted in relation to Roma migrants in Italy and France, the strengthening of the extreme right that exploited the “Gypsy issue” in Hungary and Bulgaria, and the deadly racist attacks, all cast the important “actor” of the Gypsy in the European public sphere.

The staging of the Gypsy did not only take place in the European public sphere, but also in the Central and Eastern European arena and, as in the case discussed here, in Hungarian villages, in which the economic and social problems that unfolded after the transition have remained persistently unresolved. In Hungary, one of the prime symptoms of the political crisis of 2006 and the economic crisis of 2008 was the strengthening of the extreme right, and the subsequent, sudden emergence of the Gypsy issue in public speech.

The Hungarian extreme right party Jobbik and the closely connected Hungarian Guard Association, which drew public attention with village demonstrations, organized themselves against local Roma people who supposedly threatened the local non-Roma population, calling the Gypsies collective criminals responsible for locally occurring crimes. In addition to introducing “Gypsy” discourse into the public sphere with such dangerous connotations, the demonstrations also addressed the question of the Hungarian village as an inte-

grative life sphere. Hardly any of these demonstrations were organized by locals; the demonstrators came from outside and left their mark on the life of the village.

In what follows, I highlight a specific case illustrating how the appearance of Jobbik and the Hungarian Guard forged the problem of the village as home into a vital issue. While each similar incident radicalizes the distinction between Hungarians and Gypsies, it also questions whether one who is designated as “Gypsy” can become a member of the village, and whether the village exists at all as an integrative life space.¹

Before proceeding to the description and analysis of this case, a terminological issue needs to be clarified. While the term “Roma” is used to refer to this minority group in international literature, until very recently this term was primarily associated with official language in Hungary. In my field and in Hungarian Roma communities in general, this term is rarely used, and the group itself practically never uses the term. Instead, they use *cigány* (best translated as “Gypsy”), even if it often has a negative connotation. The majority population also rarely uses the more politically correct “Roma,” instead they also use “Gypsy” or unambiguous terms such as “the minority” or “the ethnic (group).” Although Roma communities have recently made a conscious effort to “clean” *cigány* of its negative connotations, I have chosen not to use the term in this paper, as its negative meaning persists at this time. There are similar problems with regard to the use of *magyar* (Hungarian). In my field, Roma communities call the non-Roma *magyar*, which implies that the Roma do not belong to the group of Hungarians, and that these are exclusive categories. While the distinction of Roma/non-Roma is completely alien to the vernacular of the field, the *cigány/magyar* distinction serves to enforce this exclusive quality. Neither option seems satisfactory, but I have opted for the former. I therefore use “Roma” in voicing my own thoughts; when I quote from the research participants, I apply the terminology used in the field. Furthermore, when I rely on narratives from the field, I use quotation marks to indicate that the terms “*cigány*” and “*magyar*” to reflect everyday language use.

THE MISSING FOUNDATION: THE VILLAGE AS A COMMUNITY

The story unfolds in a village of 2,300 inhabitants in north-eastern Hungary. Before the transition, the nearby farmer’s cooperative and the precision engineering factory of the village provided full employment for the locals. Today, the majority of the population seeks employment in nearby towns; however, the most crucial concerns are continuous outgoing migration and the persistent unemployment of those who stay. The vil-

lage elite is primarily preoccupied by changes in the composition and status of the population.

The most major and shattering conflict in the village stems from the shifts and contradictions of the term “majority population.” “I must tell you that young people don’t stay in the village,” says the mayor. “In particular, young people with marketable professions go to the cities, and recently, ever more frequently, they go abroad. Those who stay in the village are mostly the unskilled population, largely useless in production.” According to the social worker of the village: “The urban drain on the village has been going on for decades, maybe centuries. The cities have been dragging away the intelligent, viable, potent dwellers. At the time of the cooperatives everybody got a job according to their abilities, everybody found their own place, and there was real integration.”

General unemployment, accompanied by poverty or the threat of poverty, together with demographic changes, constitute a major sense of deficiency concerning the integrity of the village. The problem of integrity, however, is strictly connected to the “Gypsy-Hungarian” differentiation, as the problem of integrity itself figures differently from the “Hungarian” and “Gypsy” viewpoints.

In this village, about 40% of the population is of Roma origin. In the traditional division of space in the village, the Roma people have been located mostly in the marginal streets of the settlement, but they also currently inhabit the evacuated houses of the non-Roma. In addition to the still significant spatial divisions, the “Gypsy-Hungarian” differentiation is also present in the labor market. The village is located just 15 km from the city of Eger; transportation is excellent due to reasonable transit traffic, the town is therefore accessible for the villagers until eleven at night. The most skilled people find work opportunities in Eger or locally, in more prestigious jobs, and a decreasing share of them make a living from agriculture. These examples, however, are characteristic of the non-Roma population, while Roma fill other positions on the labor market.

The village offers more opportunities for Roma than an average village in the region. There is a furniture factory and a mushroom production plant nearby, both of which employ mostly local Roma people, while the remaining part of agricultural production also offers employment. Most social scenes are therefore split along the “Gypsy-Hungarian” divide: almost exclusively Roma children attend the local school, while the non-Roma take their children to Eger, to more prestigious institutions.

With regard to the issue of the integrity of the village, however, reasonable differences seem to arise depending on whether the speaker is “Gypsy” or “Hungarian.” It seems that these differences play a substantial role in supporting the voic-



▲ Roma Cave Dwellers near Eger, from the series Once We Were Birds – The Roma in Hungary

es of those who expected the solution to certain problems to come from the power demonstration of Jobbik.

According to “Hungarians,” the village inhabits a social space that is no longer able to fulfill the physical and spiritual needs of its inhabitants, as it does not provide subsistence or a supportive community. The viable population leaves due to a lack of prospects, while there is a “great overpopulation of a certain group which is not capable of coexistence,” as the mayor says. The formulations “overpopulation” and “are not capable of coexistence” refer to the “Gypsy,” while “viability” refers to the “Hungarian” population. This is true even if people usually state that “it is not the majority of the Gypsies that cause problems.” Moreover, “some Gypsy families are more normal than many Hungarian ones.”

The more minor thefts and burglaries, the constant threat to the private sphere that locals have told me about, are not simply daily annoyances, but rather virtual manifestations of a lack of integrity, proof that the village is no longer able to protect its dwellers – neither by common norms nor by sanctioning the violators. This painful deficiency also refers to the “Gypsy” population, since it is common knowledge in the village that these crimes are committed by them, frequently by “Gypsy children.” At the same time, a fundamental contradiction is outlined in every conversation, whether with locals sitting in a local bar, with people actively involved in village life, or with the mayor; the contradiction between identifying problems with the “Gypsy population” as a whole and the statement that the march of the Hungarian Guard and the problems that led to the march are caused by a few “problematic families,” “immigrants” who are newcomers and do not belong to the village.

The event organized by Jobbik in autumn 2012 was closely linked to the situation described above. The village has become a space in which local problems are unsolvable, where increasing poverty, unemployment, a lack of legitimate common norms, conflict management, and the exclusive either/or nature of the “Gypsy-Hungarian” distinction have together led to the point that the village could be taken over – even if only for one Saturday afternoon – by an organization that interprets the situation on an exclusively racist basis.

In autumn 2012, with the permission of the police, Jobbik and the (by then) banned Hungarian Guard held a legal gathering on the main square of the village. They then planned to march to the house of the leader of local Roma minority municipality located in the “Gypsy settlement” to hand over a petition. The petition requested that the leader control and stop the local crimes committed by “Gypsies.”

“I was warned on the phone,” says the local Roma leader, “that the Guard would come on Saturday and that they would hand over a petition to discipline the Gypsy people so that they would not steal and rob, and that children would not loiter in the streets. But honestly, who is able to do that? Shall I hold each and every Gypsy child by the hand?!”

The villagers show a sharp contradiction between the statement, “there is no problem with the majority of the Gypsies in this village,” and the narrative of collective blame against the Roma population. The Roma children who sneak into gardens and cause damage become “them,” “the Gypsies,” who need to be disciplined one way or another. With one exception, I did not meet a single non-Roma resident who would have entirely condemned the Jobbik march, although I did not

come across anyone fully in support of it either, just to underline the strength of the previously mentioned contradiction.

The “Gypsy-Hungarian” differentiation, as mentioned, is also palpable in the judgment of the events and the reasons leading up to them. Roma talk less about the reasons; they seem more concerned with the events themselves, and the shocking experience of being accused of collective criminal activity. In speaking about reasons, local Roma people reach to the village for support, saying that they do not even know who the thieves that provoke the non-Roma population are; thus, collective criminalization does not hold water. At the same time, the march shed new light on questions about the relationship of the Roma to the integrity of the village.

TO WHOM DOES THE VILLAGE BELONG? THE CHURCH SERVICE AND THE MARCH

In the last ten years, new forms of self-organization have developed among Roma locals. These played a fundamental role in that they were not defenseless against the racist attack of the Hungarian Guard that stigmatized them as guilty of collective crimes. On the one hand, approximately a quarter of the Roma of the village belong to one of the neo-Protestant churches. On the other, the effect of the local activity of the We Belong Here national Roma movement has also been visible. Although the prime objective of the movement was to convince the local Roma population to reveal its ethnic identity in the national census, the social network that developed through the campaign also remained functional afterward. These organizations are not restricted to the local level; through the congregations and the We Belong Here movement, locals have developed a Roma social network that reaches beyond the village, which proved itself a fundamental resource when they started to organize against the march. Moreover, in the discussed case, these two networks overlapped considerably.

A member of the county’s minority municipality came up with the idea of the counter-demonstration. He is active in both types of organizations and he is not a local Roma man. When the local Roma learned about Jobbik’s plans, they first reached out to him for help.

Following his suggestion, the first idea of those locals who were active in the congregations and the Roma movement was to organize a public mass and a march on the main road of the village. However, the police rejected their request, so they were wedged between the “ghetto-walls” of the “Gypsy settlement.” “In other places, Gypsies blocked their way,” says a local Roma man, who is active in one of the neo-Protestant churches and who organized the counter-demonstration. “It is a shame that the leaders of the village let the Hungarian Guard come in. The Hungarian Guard needed permission to come in, and the mayor gave it! Nobody asked us, and the other shameful thing is that the village leaders did not let us have our own march; we were blocked and not allowed to come out. It was humiliating.”

I heard many people complain about the humiliating feeling of being confined. Local leaders and police aimed to separate the two sides from each other, which is understandable, although the local Roma at the same time questioned why Jobbik was entitled to invade the village, while they, as local dwellers, were not allowed to demonstrate. Many appreciated the police presence around the Roma neighborhood, but resented that they were blocked in, and that a temporary,

but symbolically strong, ghetto was thereby created. “There was one thing we found offensive,” says the local Roma leader. “That they insulted us, they called us stinky, dirty Gypsies, they threatened to hang us, and the same field guard was yelling that we should get away from here because they would burn our houses down, and so on. It was insulting, and we could not protect ourselves. We couldn’t go there and explain that we are not stinky Gypsies, or murderers, and we are not cannibals, because they were saying things like we had already eaten two Hungarian children and stuff. But we were locked up in here and couldn’t tell our truth!”

The police and the leaders of the village prevented the Roma people from acting as political actors, as dwellers representing their own interests in the space of the village. Most non-Roma, including the mayor, expected the Roma to be completely passive, because according to them, being active would only provoke more violence. The mass played an important role for the Roma in “proving that the Gypsies answer violence peacefully, with a service,” as one of the Roma organizers says, but the non-Roma villagers did not particularly appreciate the gesture: “They should rather learn the Ten Commandments,” many said. As it turned out, this not-so-witty response was Jobbik’s message to the local Roma leader and to the Roma of the village. The mayor did not agree with the idea of responding to a mass event with a mass event, either. The mass media reacted similarly, and most reports did not even include the response of the local Roma. They did not get the recognition they expected, and the much longed-for integrative force of Christianity remained out of reach.

The Jobbik event lasted for a couple of hours. After the speeches on the main square, the protesters started walking toward the “Gypsy settlement,” although the police stopped them, and from that point on until the evening, the “Gypsy settlement” became a ghetto, with the space outside being

dangerous to the “Gypsies.” There was about a hundred meters between the “Gypsy settlement” and the bridge leading to it, where Jobbik was gathered. Only the police could enter the area in between, demarcating a no man’s land between the two parties, the Gypsies and the Hungarians. That day, locals from the village existed as “Gypsies” and “Hungarians” in two separate spaces, like two disconnected entities, without crossing between the two. This strong spatial symbolism and the experiences it entailed left traces on the life of the village. As the mayor put it: “The village will never be the same again.”

However, it is certain that many do not want or cannot leave the village or the country. Nevertheless, it seems that being “at home” as a “Gypsy” is a task that can only be currently fulfilled with the support of a force beyond the everyday social context:

“I was a confused man without a self-image, without self-awareness,” says a local man who organized the church service. “Faith has given me determination, self-esteem, and the same goes for being a Gypsy. There is so much grievance and rejection we have to face in this country, it can be harmful, but we can recover again and again. This rejection is so depressing, that we are not Hungarians, we are Gypsy people, we are not part of this country and this village. Where shall I go? Shall I kill myself or go away from here? If I weren’t a believer, I would have left the country already, but I am a Christian, a believer; I know who I am, I know my rights, I know who I am through my faith, that God wants to see me here, and there is a reason why I was born into this place.”

The author is a PhD candidate in Cultural Studies at the University of Pécs. Her main areas of research include changes of Hungarian-Gypsy differentiation, the kinship system in Roma communities, and gender relationships.

REFERENCES

1. The research on which the article is based was conducted as part of the ACCEPT PLURALISM project carried out by the research team of the Central European University. The project was funded by the European Union.



Vladimir Weiss

MOBILITY IS AN OPPORTUNITY

INTERVIEW WITH **EDUARD PALÍŠEK**,
CEO OF SIEMENS CZECH REPUBLIC

CONDUCTED BY PAVLA FRANCOVÁ

Is labor mobility in Europe an issue for Siemens, and from what perspective?

Certainly, this is an issue for us. If we talk about relocating for work, we must remember that there are two factors behind it. One is positive, namely an effort by people to acquire new experiences, knowledge, contacts, and so on. On the other hand, there are other factors that are negative, such as the effort to break from particular social, political, and economic environments. At Siemens, we naturally welcome positive motivation. We try to create conditions for our employees so they do not have to face the negative motivation to relocate.

Why do you consider labor migration positive?

It is positive and important for everyone who wants to develop further. Thanks to migration, people can gain experience in an international environment. We have a system in which we publish vacant positions worldwide in Siemens. If we need, for example, a manager or technical expert, all Siemens employees worldwide can see and apply for that job. That's how we create big opportunities for further career development.



But don't people run away elsewhere?

We have many people who are on short-term and long-term work internships abroad. Some even have standard employment contracts in other countries. It makes sense and is a positive contribution for us. We see this as a demonstration of the maturity of the company in a given country. If a corporation only accepts external assistance and experts, it suggests that it is at a stage where it has nothing to offer. There is nothing bad about that; every company has to go through it. However, once it reaches a higher level and has created its own base of experts and good managers, it levels up with other large corporations. It not only hires professionals but can also send them on. It is very important for us to have an equal role in this respect throughout Siemens.

Does it work?

We (Siemens Czech Republic) have been recently promoted to "lead the country." This means that we are among the thirty countries in the world that are in direct interest of the top management of Siemens. This is due to the quality of the workforce, universities, and research organizations. We have also been remarked upon due to our size. Given the number of employees globally, we are among the top ten countries. Siemens operates in 160 countries around the world, which is something to be proud of.

With such a large network, how do you harness the experience of people abroad?

In addition to their own development and experience, people bring new contacts with other professionals in the field from outside. The positive effect is not just for that particular employee but also for the whole company, which gains better links with the international environment.

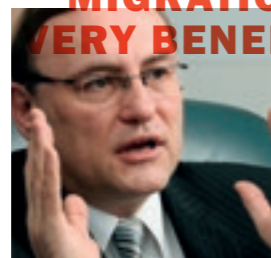
But labor migration is not always perfect. We hear a lot about the problem of "brain drain."

Losing the best, most qualified people can be a real problem for a country. It is therefore necessary to address the problem systematically, to ensure that such people have a place to return to. It is good when great professionals leave to expand their experience, but the key issue is to offer them conditions to which they can return afterward.

But how? Isn't it all about money and the capacity to pay these experts?

Here is an example: many research institutions have recently been built in the Czech Republic using money from European Union funds. With regard to instrumentation, these are among the best in the world – this is one prerequisite for young scientists to return from abroad. These workplaces address the highly demanding tasks of basic and applied research, where scientists can apply their new expertise – this is the second prerequisite. We cannot therefore succumb to populist voices, according to which money for basic and applied research should only serve innovation in companies. We need to look at this as an interconnected system in which one part cannot exist without the other. In-

LABOR MIGRATION IS BENEFICIAL TO FIRMS THAT BRING EMPLOYEES IN FROM ELSEWHERE. IT PROVIDES A NEW VIEWPOINT, DIFFERENT KNOWLEDGE, AND CONTACTS, AS WELL AS COMPELLING EMPLOYEES TO USE OTHER LANGUAGES. SUCH MIGRATION IS VERY BENEFICIAL.



novation cannot work without research, which, in turn, cannot happen without funding from innovation. Any imbalance could lead to severe consequences for several years. This is just what we need to focus on in the issue of repatriation of scientists and other experts: it is not just about superior research institutions, it is necessary to have highly advanced and demanding challenges so that these people

have enough incentive to return and work on solving them.

A prerequisite is, of course, to ensure that the financial evaluation of top professionals reflects their importance to companies, institutions, and society.

In the Czech Republic we have top professionals, although some do not realize this and express more admiration for neighboring countries. I am honored to sit on the scientific boards of the three top universities – the Czech Technical University, the Brno University of Technology, and the University of West Bohemia – and see what kind of specialists work there. There's incredible potential. I hope, however, that some impetuous steps being contemplated don't stifle this and drive scientists to leave. We would then really only depend on foreign know-how.

But isn't this brain drain already happening? It is visible in other sectors. Are people really coming back?

The world does not evolve linearly. It undergoes fundamental change on the basis of a number of factors that are very difficult to predict, although we can prepare for them. How the situation in this area evolves depends a great deal on the priorities and strategies of the government for the future direction of the Czech Republic. A country that does not have significant oil or coal reserves, access to the sea, or a great expanse for agriculture must focus on its greatest strength: activities with higher added value. In our case, this is a long technical and scientific tradition that persists in creative, well-educated, and hard-working people. Much will also depend on the conditions created by the state for entrepreneurs, and thus employment.

If the priority of the state is to create higher added value, then, logically, it will work with companies that focus on professionalism and expertise. This would also attract people from abroad, and would bring links to other foreign institutions, in addition to know-how.

It is similar in companies. We often hear that there is a lack of technicians and that they are not as good as in the past. This is not true. It depends on a specific company approach and how attractive that company is. We do not have difficulty finding good engineers. We understand that a recent university graduate can't – from day one – accomplish the same as someone with five years' experience. It is the job of the company to work with that graduate. In addition, the attractiveness of

a job and motivation also lies in the opportunity to travel and gain international experience.

Generally, labor migration is beneficial to firms that bring employees in from elsewhere. It provides a new viewpoint, different knowledge, and contacts, and compels employees to use other languages. Such migration is very beneficial.

In which countries or specializations are Siemens' employees most interested?

We send our employees to take part in various projects. These last from one week to four years; the range of possibilities is very wide. In the last five years we have sent 500 employees to work abroad. Most often they headed to Germany, the U.S., Austria, Russia, China, and Indonesia. People who come here are mostly from Germany, Austria, and the U.S. We choose delegates according to their specific expertise for a given project or general specialization.

What are your expectations about the interest of people from the East in working at Siemens? Are you already seeing or expecting to see such a development in connection with recent events in Ukraine?

We do not differentiate. Anyone who is here legally and applies for a job is considered only on the basis of his/her expertise and knowledge. Place of origin or religion don't matter. We work a lot with Russians, Ukrainians, Kazakhs, and others. They enrich our Czech team, bringing with them a new approach, which helps us learn to perceive our cultural differences mutually.

With regard to current events in Ukraine and their impact on the migration of Ukrainians, it is difficult to make predictions at the moment. Their interest in working in the West is long-term. On the other hand some experts may want to help their country and realize that if they leave, they weaken the position of their country. It is hard to say what will prevail; there is no reliable forecast.

If you consider labor migration to be beneficial, what could be done to make relocating for work easier?

That is very difficult and complex issue. The perception of migration has changed a lot over time; just look at the recent example of the anti-immigration measures in Switzerland. Firstly, however, we should address issues that cause a generally negative view of immigration. States must adapt to new conditions, and I think they don't do enough in this respect.

People who come from a different cultural background bring with them certain habits and should be able to respect the new environment, but you can't expect them to completely forsake their identity. The host country should create conditions that encourage tolerance of diversity. In addition, there is also the economic impact of migration – whether positive or negative. If people from abroad have the opportunity to help the economy of the state, adding certain competences, and so on, then the overall perception might improve.

Often, on the contrary, we hear of the maladjustment of those who come from

abroad to work. Can it really be such a benefit?

I'd rather blame those who don't allow for immigrants to be well integrated into their society. The general perspective must be balanced.

How do you perceive mobility as such, not only from the perspective of Siemens? Do other companies exploit its potential enough?

Our approach is possible thanks to the size of Siemens. The situation is different for local firms than for those that operate worldwide. For smaller, local companies, it is obviously more difficult.

How will the aging of the European population affect labor migration?

We are the victims of certain stereotypes. Today, people are professionally active much longer than their grandparents were. Although the population is aging, it has also extended the average age of life expectancy and the ability to be involved in a productive workforce. If the number of newborn doesn't significantly diminish, I don't see it as a fundamental problem. The involvement of older people in the workforce is often wrongly underestimated. On the contrary, we should face this and adapt to it. Additionally, politicians and companies must think more about how to create better conditions for families to ensure population growth.

Translated by Tomáš Volf

Pavla Francová is a reporter for the Czech business online daily *lhned.cz*.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

A WORLD OF IDEAS – ŚWIAT IDEI



"RZECZY SIĘ STAJĄ, IDEE ISTNIEJĄ."

PLATON

CAŁY ŚWIAT IDEI NA WWW.PROJECT-SYNDICATE.PL

NO DRAIN, NO GAIN

Migrations are like tides – there is little governments can do to influence them. Then why not get over it and start supporting citizens wherever they choose to live?

MACIEJ KUZIEMSKI

Brain drain is a phenomenon that has been in existence longer than the actual term. Be they philosophers drawn to Athens by Plato or the likes of Amerigo Vespucci cruising the world in search of new lands, for centuries the most innovative, skilled, and motivated individuals have exercised their freedom by seeking better prospects outside their countries of origin. Until the birth of nation-states, migration by skilled workers was not considered a major problem. Not only because of the substantially less mobility of the general public, but also because of lack of popular education and healthcare. The introduction of those two institutions reshuffled the proportions of commitment and loyalty expected by governments in exchange for various level of social security and stability.

Increased mobility is a blessing for everyone except the administrations that treat the upbringing of citizens as a literal investment that will become fruitful the moment individual citizens enter the labor market. Indeed, as in a market economy, some investments pay back immediately, some with delay, while others bring terrible losses. A wise investor diversifies his portfolio, is extremely patient, and closely watches tendencies and movements. That

being said, would Hungary benefit more if Soros Gyementhad not migrated to London and later to New York at the age of seventeen?

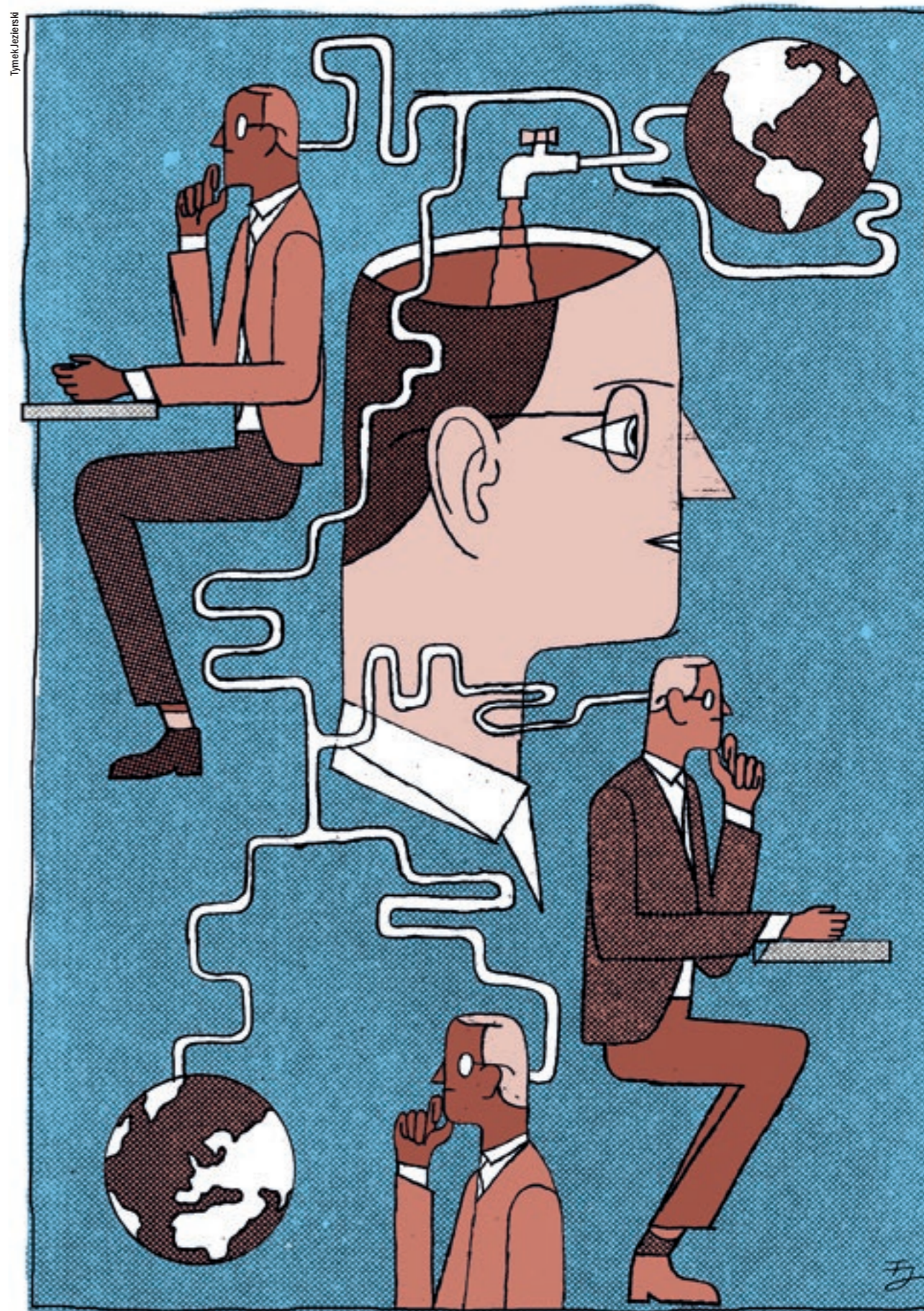
Brain drain is not what it used to be, at least not in the European Union. There are places on earth that are irreversibly drained of their creative class and intelligentsia. Think of factors such as closed borders, oppressive regimes, censorship of media, or the shadow of war.

Europe as we know it is quite the opposite: we are living in the best place on earth for income equality *en masse* and taking advantage of privileges we don't have elsewhere for income extraordinary, such as reliable public transportation, healthcare, fairly accessible education at every level, and all other aspects that make our landscape predictable and easy to maneuver. It is often forgotten that the economy is not the sole motivator of migrants, as is especially visible when it comes to millennials who tend to hold very different values than their parents, preferring collaboration over competition and flexibility of work to actual earnings. Add to that the unstable labor market *et voilà*, the outcome is a completely different setting that is easy neither to analyze nor to compare to current traits. Skilled migration is becoming less definitive than ever, resembling more the 17th-18th century Grand Tours than actual migration with gap years, dirt-cheap

flights, and Erasmus, European graduates moving into adulthood are well traveled and reasonably flexible. Unlike the current workforce, they are not donably flexible. Unlike a lifetime at one company, but they will not accept eternal internships either. They demand less from their surroundings while raising the bar for themselves. It doesn't come less definitively working on a project-based scheme in London while calling Prague "home" and spending weekends in Berlin. Can these fluid and incomplete movements still be called migrations? I have no idea, but scholars and data analysts may feel a little confused.

Any kind of transborder movement, however, has a beneficial impact on a source country of migrants. The latest study by the World Bank digs into thirty years of African migrations and finds a direct link between migration and an increase in exports of oneation and nto thirty years of African migrations, brain drain can help developing economies by opening their markets and domesticating local products. Strong diasporas around the world shape trade habits and sales with informal sanctions and boycotts, not to mention the competitiveness, diversity, and creativity of societies.

The crisis of 2007 led to the real estate price crash in the PIGS countries and other struggling economies, causing severe depopulation and forcing many to



move abroad. While traditional professions and living patterns have become no longer profitable, whole neighborhoods are redesigned by such crashes. The deserted towns and villages of Sicily and Costa del Sol have been repopulated by middle-class foreigners seeking holiday refuge, or creative people bored with city life, reinforcing the market and shaping the future identity of the communities that adapt to new circumstances.

This interconnected world leaves less and less room for governments trying to control migration flows. At the same time, economic and security threats overshadow the potential benefits of intact mobility. A few years from now, a merely modestly wealthy Central Europe will face the demographic problems that rich democracies currently face. Scholars point to this as a bottleneck for economic development of the region; it is an issue policymakers will surely have to address.

The recent turmoil in the Eastern Partnership countries may be useful in finding a solution. One effective way to aid markets, advance relations, and fulfill promises is to create specific measures and policies facilitating the mobility and labor of our neighbors within the EU.

What about our migrants, though? All too often they are not identified or

approached by the governments of their source countries.

Although communication is a two-way street, it is the duty of administrations to reach out to their citizens, even if it is due to sheer pragmatism. This is particularly true in the CEE region, where memories of the past era still dominate troubled relationships and, in some circles, any contact with communist administrations was considered treason unless it was an absolute necessity.

One of the common misconceptions presents migrants as unwilling to engage with their country anymore. In many cases however, this is not true – according to a recent analysis by the Pew Research Center, the number of yearly remittances (money sent back home by migrants) has tripled since 2000. Making relocation to the home country attractive to upmarket emigrants requires elaborate measures that cannot be offered by shabby diplomatic posts without considerable budgets. Serpentine taxation rules and horrific customer service standards do not help, either. Be they university alumni clubs offering job opportunities and maintaining contacts between fellow students or HR offices of multinational companies easing relocation, the academic and corporate worlds serve as great examples for mod-

ern networking and building long-term commitments.

Traditional self-identities (such as family and nation) are taking a beating from contemporary scholars. The more their durability and applicability is questioned, the more effort governments make to present national narratives as captivating. That is the tricky part, as people tend to fall for narratives that create opportunities and associations, rather than obligations and duties. How can diasporas benefit from keeping in touch without turning about and changing their habits? With the very limited toolkit that policymakers have, the only way is to reach out to sectors that cut their teeth on meandering through competitive environments, that create meaningful and mutually advantageous public-private partnerships, and encircle diasporas with knowledge-transfer opportunities and homeland investment options. They must break bad habits and challenge the status quo – foster national *guanxi*, even as one of many identities. Skilled émigrés will return to their countries of origin, this way or another. All they need is a little pepping up.

The author is a project coordinator at the Lech Wałęsa Institute and an editor of *Res Publica Nowa*.

REFERENCES

- From Job Search to Skill Search: Political Economy of Labor Migration in Central and Eastern Europe, by Lucia Kureková.
- Policy Briefs on the Transcultural Aspects of Security and Stability, edited by Nayef R. F. Al-Rodha.
- Changing Patterns of Global Migration and Remittances, by Phillip Connor.
- Does Migration Foster Exports? Evidence from Africa, by Hélène Ehrhart, Maëlan Le Goff, Emmanuel Rocher and Raju Jan Singh.

NEW EUROPE 100

2 OCTOBER 2014
NE100.ORG

“One of the few places where the word Europe is not yawn-inspiring but productive.”

(La Stampa)

eurozine.com

Focal points 2014:

- Ukraine in focus
- The ends of democracy
- Russia in global dialogue

EUROZINE – Europe's leading cultural magazines at your fingertips



TECH STARTUPS OF NEW EUROPE

A backwater image of New Europe countries is no longer accurate. Over the last twenty-five years, we have been witnessing a spectacular development in culture, business, and politics. Here, as an example, we examine three cases of success of tech startups.

KORNEL KORONOWSKI

A whole new generation of challengers in New Europe has been generating big ideas that better the lives of many. What is missing is an open debate about what makes those individuals take such initiative and how to make their success stories part of the global narrative. One of most overlooked forms of development in this respect is tech startups.

Hungarian Peter Arvai is CEO and co-founder of Prezi, an established innovative presentation software company, whose software is used by over 28 million users from over 190 countries. In 2012, in an interview with *The New York Times* he admitted that: "One of the challenges is that people just don't know that these amazing companies are being built in Hungary." This statement applies to the whole of so-called New Europe. Countries from Estonia to Croatia, from the Czech Republic to Romania, are still not expected to be hubs of great innovation.

We have not succeeded in communicating to the world that New Europe is a competitive place, characterized by daring ideas and the spirit of entrepreneurship. "People feel empowered, seeing examples like Prezi, and know that if you work hard, and have a little bit of luck, you can build a globally successful

brand," encourages Arvai. In addition to Prezi, Arvai also established the world's first mobile newsreader to follow TED Talks and actively advocates for developing a startup culture in Hungary.

Rafał Brzoska of InPost, a private postal services company, has thrown down the gauntlet to the monopolist Poczta Polska (Polish Post). Nobody really believed in his endeavor. Everything was at odds against him: small resources and an enormous task to accomplish, not to forget regulatory matters concerning consignments weighing less than fifty grams, which he outsmarted by adding metal badges to all letters sent by InPost.

Today, Brzoska has not only won a number of the battles in the David-and-Goliath fight, but has also started international expansion. He established a business called easyPack by InPost, which enables the sending and collection of parcels 24 hours a day. Currently, the company boasts around 2,500 easyPacks on four different continents, and is planning to add 10,000 more by 2016.

Jan Koum's tweet from February 2014 read: "If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible." It summarizes his journey from a poor emigrant to a billionaire with a net worth of around seven billion US dollars; an insane fortune created within five years with the use of an app.

The Whatsapp – immensely popular messenger app – founder was born in Kyiv. He moved to the United States as a teenager, enrolled in college, and started working in the consulting industry. A few months after the creation of App Store by Apple, he realized its great potential. His idea for business was simple to the point of being obvious: "Being able to reach somebody half way across the world instantly, on a device that is always with you, was powerful." But he was most successful with his application. As it happened, he was not alone in his optimism in Whatsapp. The best comparison of the potential in Whatsapp was the price paid by Facebook for the company. Estonia's GDP in 2012 was around 22 billion dollars; its population is 1.3 million citizens.

Whatsapp valuation was 19 billion dollars. Whatsapp has fifty-five employees.

Could Whatsapp's worldwide success be repeated if the idea had never left Ukraine? It would have been much less of a success. Koum could have created a good app but he may not have had enough resources to make it great. Analysis of money stream flows from private equity companies to startups in New Europe shows that he wouldn't have received enough backup on time. In all probability, somebody with a similar product would have taken Whatsapp's place.

Why does private equity funds rarely invest in New Europe? What constraints have we created for ourselves? Perhaps the most important of those is our own disbelief in our own potential.

What if Brzoska's easyPack had had substantial financial backup earlier as a startup? Imagine how many powerful innovative ideas are relegated to obscurity because too few expect greatness from this part of the world. What if somebody did notice them, believed in them, and decided to invest in them at an early stage? Keep these questions in mind when we announce our list of challengers – New Europe 100 – this autumn.

The author is a project coordinator for "New Europe 100".



◀ Rafał Brzoska of InPost, a private postal services company, has thrown down the gauntlet to the monopolist Poczta Polska.

Tomasz Zurek / REPORTER EAST NEWS

WHAT PEOPLE THINK OF DEMOCRACY

DEMOCRACY IS IN TROUBLE.

THE CURRENT CRISIS IS FAR MORE

THAN AN ECONOMIC

OR A FISCAL ONE ALONE.

RADOSŁAW MARKOWSKI

It is a crisis of democracy, in particular its alleged role in mitigating market forces in creating the socio-political order, ensuring social justice, and fair redistribution. The past few years have seen new phenomena concerning democracy; normative expectations toward this type of regime seem to fluctuate, disappointment with a minimalist understanding of democracy appears to set the stage for many demonstrations, and numerous groups are voicing their expectation of a more substance-defined democracy, calling for justification of the outcomes of particular models of democracy. Indeed, democracies differ, their particular variants emphasize different aspects and are based on fundamentally distinctive components.

What follows is divided into sections. In the first, I briefly discuss the general idea and assumptions of the recent European Social Survey (ESS) Module 6, which will be discussed thereafter. In the second, a short analysis of the “experts’ judgments” will be presented. In the third, the Central East European (CEE) democratic landscape is unveiled, with special focus on the Polish case. The fourth discusses the main findings and assessments of the newly launched initiative Polish Democratic Audit 2014, followed by conclusions.

Theoretical assumptions of ESS Module 6 theme: “Europeans views and evaluations of democracy.”

Irrespective of the current socio-economic crisis, the majority of Europeans consider democracy the best of all possible regimes. This being said, so far, we know relatively little about what it is exactly that Europeans appreciate about this regime type. For these reasons, ESS Module 6 has been deliberately designed to unveil the disentangled components of democracy for most European countries.

On the one hand, democracy is considered a contested concept, and on the other it is seen as multifaceted. Following classics like Robert Dahl (1998) or David Held (2006), one is encouraged to speak of *models of democracy*. Regardless of how serious we are about the models, we can speak of certain *dimensions of democracy*. One of the fundamentally disputed “core” issues of what belongs to democracy and what does not, has been the conditions necessary for democracy. These baseline, core components of democracy comprise a minimalist approach to democracy. To summarize the ESS Module 6 approach to the study of democracy, one may say we have assumed that: (a) contemporary democracy is a *liberal* democracy; this liberal principle requires that the state address its citizens in the language of law and that citizens are effectively protected from arbitrary decisions; (b) it also has two *electoral* components, of which “free and fair elections” together with

guarantees of “responsiveness and accountability” are the crux of the democratic dimension. The above requisites of democracy comprise the “basic model.” Current developments, however, are increasingly insisting on additional stipulations: one aspect of these are procedural in nature, with direct, populist features, while the other, which is content and output-related, pertains to the “social justice” aspects of the democratic order, to mitigating income inequality, and to combating poverty.

Let us briefly discuss the general results of how Europeans view democracy – what they think it *ought to be like*.

The 2012 ESS Module results concerning the normative visions of democracy by all Europeans show that two main components of its *liberal* and *electoral* dimensions are: “equality before the law” and “free and fair elections.” These are seen as the most important in general and in particular countries, with slightly more salience given to the liberal component. If one looks at the sixteen aspects of democracy Module 6 asked about, two components fall systematically at the bottom of the salience ladder: deliberation (“activity aimed at political discussion with other fellow citizens before deciding whom to vote for”) and pan-European responsiveness (“responsibility towards other European governments”). An important result for the more expanded model of democracy is the fact that among one of the most frequently ranked aspects of democracy is the *social justice* dimension, namely the normative expectation that democracy consists in part of “policies aimed at combating poverty.” Moreover, these relatively higher expectations of the outputs of democracies are found in younger, more fragile democracies. Now we move on to discuss the details of CEE citizens’ attitudes towards democracies, with particular focus on Poland.

Comparative democratic assessments

Overall assessment of the rule of law in the region (and worldwide) is undertaken by various projects, among the most acknowledged are the Rule of Law Index¹ and the BTI Index.² CEE countries’ rule of law performance evaluation indicates that, as of 2012, the countries of the region can roughly be divided into two groups; the first is composed of Estonia, the Czech Repub-

lic, and Poland, where the rule of law seems to work fairly well even by OECD standards, with primary shortcomings being judicial delays and difficulties enforcing court decisions. The second group, comprised of Romania, Bulgaria, Latvia, and more recently Hungary,³ seem to have more profound problems, including persistent corruption, widespread discrimination against minorities, ineffective prosecution of abuse of office, and separation of powers including the questionable independence of the judiciary. Moreover, the Bertelsmann Index shows that the latter group differs from the first in its poor democratic performance, expressed in terms of lower freedom of expression scores, inferior performance of and commitment to democratic institutions, mediocre socio-political integration in terms of vague infrastructure of interest groups, lower approval of democratic norms, and poorer social capital (BTI 2014).

Generally, no clear models of democracy in the region can be depicted from these expert judgment data, except for the claim that Estonia, Poland, and the Czech Republic seem to lean toward a more liberal model of democracy, while other, less embedded democracies that frequently face acute ethnic minority problems, tend to favor more populist solutions, like those in Bulgaria, Romania, and, to a lesser extent, Lithuania, Latvia, and Slovakia.

(I) THEORY VS THE “REAL WORLD”

The results of the analyzes employed for normative visions and evaluative clusters of democracy as seen by West European and CEE citizens are based on evaluating sixteen features (components) of democracy. The initial task was to discover whether these sixteen aspects cluster together into recognizable and theoretically grounded models of democracy. The results (detailed computations available upon request from the author) point to the following: theoretical assumptions do not always fit the revealed empirical reality. The components of the four models distinguished theoretically do not cluster together as expected; instead, we are witnessing a more complicated reality. All in all, however, we can certainly claim (a) that the liberal and electoral components of democracies cluster strongly together, and that (b) Europeans attribute “social justice” expectations to the way they conceive contemporary democracy, and that is new. Socio-economic redistributive issues are likely to be a permanent feature of the democratic reality from now on.

NORMATIVE EXPECTATIONS OF DEMOCRACIES (THEIR MEANING) AMONG CEE CITIZENS. (FIVE MOST IMPORTANT AND THREE – LEAST IMPORTANT)

| | MEAN | SD |
|---|------|------|
| 1. The courts treat everyone the same | 9.05 | 1.76 |
| 2. National elections are free and fair | 8.95 | 1.72 |
| 3. The government explains its decisions to voters | 8.88 | 1.72 |
| 4. The media provide citizens with reliable information to judge the government | 8.81 | 1.79 |
| 5. The government protects all citizens against poverty | 8.64 | 2.05 |
| 1. Voters discuss politics with people they know before deciding how to vote | 7.54 | 2.56 |
| 2. Important for democracy: the government sticks to policies vs. changes policies in response to people | 7.19 | 2.95 |
| 3. Important for democracy: prevent citizens from expressing extreme views vs. everyone free to express political views | 6.88 | 3.22 |

(II) ANALYSIS OF THE DETAILED FEATURES OF DEMOCRACY: NORMATIVE AND EVALUATIVE

In depicting the normative expectations of European citizens toward democracy as a regime type, one needs not only to look at the complex clusters of constitutive elements of particular models, but analyze those very components separately as well, which will follow in this section. For the sake of simplicity, the entries present only the top five and bottom three features of democracy. The content of these tables allows us to claim the following: first, the truly important aspects of democracy from a normative perspective are the same in the West and in CEE countries. The five most salient elements are: “courts treating everyone equally,” “free and fair elections,” “governments explaining decisions to voters,” “media providing reliable information about the government,” and “government protecting citizens against poverty.” Second, “electoral” and “liberal” aspects clearly enjoy the highest assessment scores. In this respect, the citizens of both parts of Europe differ only slightly; nonetheless, citizens of the stable democracies of the West cherish the functioning of the core electoral institutions more than their eastern neighbors. Third, in both parts of Europe, the one single domain of democracy that is both normatively most appreciated and highly valued in terms of its daily performance is “free and fair elections,” which is the distinct aspect considered equally by the classics and by students of democracy as an absolutely necessary condition for calling a regime democratic.

(III) NEW DEMOCRACIES: SPECIFICITIES OF THE ANALYZED COUNTRIES

Citizens of CEE polities differ in the normative and performance assessment of their respective democracies. Among the seven CEE countries under scrutiny,⁴ **Bulgaria** stands out as a case on its own. Its citizens assess the functioning of their democracy the worst as compared to other countries, in almost all aspects of democracy, except the populist dimension. In comparing the Bulgarians’ normative expectations of what democracy ought to be with the assessment of its performance, one arrives at the worst figures, indicating that this polity is indeed facing acute legitimacy problems. This also applies to such fundamental aspects and absolutely necessary preconditions of democracy as “free and fair elections.” The

Czech Republic is best characterized by a clear “liberal” profile in terms of normative expectations. Czech citizens, renowned for their pragmatism, do not insist on the “social justice” features of democracy, probably because it is fulfilled in the country fairly well (lowest income inequality combined with relative affluence). **Estonians** seem fairly dissatisfied with the freedom of their media and the way minority rights are protected. Taking into account that a considerable part of society is composed of a specific, “new Russian minority” (some of whom do not even have Estonian citizenship), the overall assessment of this aspect is not surprising. **Hungarians** visibly value the alternatives of their party system, the quality of information in their media, and two aspects of “social justice:” combating poverty and promoting egalitarianism. Normatively speaking, they appreciate the protection of minority rights while realizing that this particular aspect of democracy is poorly implemented in their country. Rather low normative expectations concerning equality before the law calls for interpretation by specialists. It is likely to be related to the recent and particular period in Hungarian history that began with the 2010 election results and a parliamentary constitutional majority in the hands of, *de facto*, a single party, resulting in very instrumental treatment of new constitutional provisions aimed at pursuing purely political goals. **Poles** express the most appreciation for the “liberal” and “electoral” components of democracy (the courts treating everyone equally, the media providing reliable information, and elections being free and fair) with relatively high salience attached to “popular control” (the government explaining its policies). In their evaluations of democratic performance, the highest assessment was found in “freedom of expression of extreme views,” “media freedom,” “freedom of opposition parties,” and “elections as free and fair.” In all four instances, the positive scores assigned are the highest among the seven countries mentioned here. The somewhat high discrepancy between selected normative expectations and performance evaluations is due to the fact that on many issues, Poles are by far the most normatively demanding society in the region. **Slovenes** reveal relatively little specificity in their attitudes towards democracy, except for relatively high appreciation of minority rights (both normative and pertaining to performance), by far the highest evaluation of direct democracy performance (“citizens have a final say in referenda”), and quite salient normative appreciation

of the “social justice” facets of democracy. Finally, Slovaks, more clearly than other CEE citizens, do not cherish media freedom and or express appreciation for the day-to-day functioning of the media; the same applies to “equality before the law.” What is extremely specific is the high value accorded to the performance of both “social justice” aspects of democracy, namely combating poverty and leveling out income. On the other hand, accountability mechanisms (“government parties should be punished when doing a bad job”) are definitely much less of a normative priority than in all other countries of the region.

Overarching remarks concerning country-specific citizens’ attitudes towards democracy will be discussed in the conclusions. At this point, suffice it to emphasize that: (a) the revealed features of particular democracies based on ESS data is similar to what one might find in comparative evaluations of democracy, most notably the recent BTI 2014 indexes and WJP Rule of Law Index 2012-2013; and (b) in countries that seem to have serious problems with the quality of their democracy, as evaluated by international experts, these shortcomings are confirmed by the citizens of those very countries.

New approach to democratic legitimacy

In this section, a new approach to the empirical study of democratic legitimacy is proposed; namely, conceiving legitimacy as the relationship between what *ought to be* and *how it is*.

In what follows, an attempt will be made to answer the following questions:

1) To what extent does democratic legitimacy depend on citizens’ key attitudes toward democracy, its ideal, and its performance, on the one hand, and whether it hinges on voters’ crucial assessments of the performance of the national economy and the incumbent government, on the other?

2) What is the size of the relative impact of these two types of factors?

3) What is the role of the particular political and socio-demographic factors assumed to play a role in determining satisfaction with democracy?

The results of numerous attempts to explain democratic legitimacy points to the following⁵:

Democratic legitimacy depends more on daily experiences with its functioning and less on appreciating it as an ideal regime type. It sounds trivial but it is probably a consequential result, especially for decisions by policy makers (those who ask legitimate questions in democracies about the “possibility of politics”) and those concerned with general political stability. Democratic legitimacy also hinges on evaluations of the state of economy and the actions of incumbents, but their impact is weaker.

In general answer to the main question (whether political-democratic or economic-redistributive factors matter more for democratic legitimacy), is that it is the former matter more. This, however, applies less to the democratic legitimacy of the “social justice” dimension. This particular dimension and the determinants of its legitimacy unveils additional peculiarities: it is dependent more – and in a way reversely – than the other dimensions on less educated and more poorly included citizens, with poorer social assets. This means that the ontological status of this dimension is different and polities that seek legitimacy on the grounds of “social justice” redistributive policies ought to address it with different segments of their respective populations; more so – as macro-contextual interactions show – in less affluent, more unequal, and more fragile democracies.

Polish democracy as of 2012-2013

The first wave of the Democratic Audit of Poland (DAP), which covers and evaluates the quality of the Polish democracy as of 2012-2013, is a multifaceted enterprise that utilizes academic research tools, such as public opinion research and “experts’ judgments” concerning numerous areas of Poland’s contemporary democracy. A substantial part of the inquiry is grounded in detailed inspections of available objective indicators, those obtainable from the Central Statistical Office or respective ministries and foundations, NGOs, and the like. At this point, let me quote excerpts from the general conclusions of its 2014 report.

NORMATIVE EXPECTATIONS OF DEMOCRACIES (THEIR MEANING) AMONG WESTERN EUROPEAN CITIZENS. (FIVE MOST IMPORTANT AND THREE – LEAST IMPORTANT)

| | MEAN | SD |
|--|------|------|
| 1. The courts treat everyone the same | 9.26 | 1.48 |
| 2. National elections are free and fair | 9.01 | 1.58 |
| 3. The government explains its decisions to voters | 8.85 | 1.58 |
| 4. The media provide citizens with reliable information to judge the government | 8.70 | 1.79 |
| 5. The government protects all citizens against poverty | 8.60 | 1.83 |
| 1. Important for democracy: prevent from expressing extreme views vs. everyone free to express political views | 7.71 | 2.95 |
| 2. Voters discuss politics with people they know before deciding how to vote | 7.37 | 2.35 |
| 3. Important for democracy: the government sticks to policies vs. changes policies in response to people | 6.91 | 3.26 |

PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS OF DEMOCRACIES BY CEE CITIZENS. (FIVE MOST IMPORTANT AND THREE – LEAST IMPORTANT)

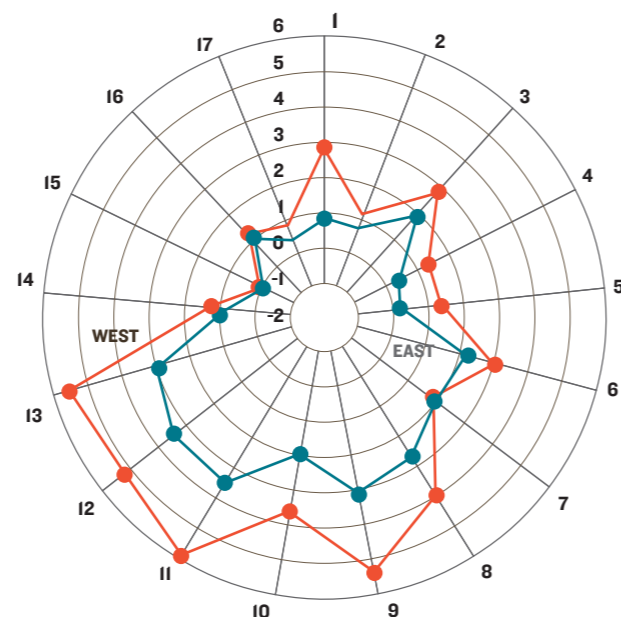
| | MEAN | SD |
|---|------|------|
| 1. In the country, the media are free to criticize the government | 7.06 | 2.59 |
| 2. In the country, opposition parties are free to criticize the government | 7.04 | 2.56 |
| 3. In the country, people with extreme views are prevented from expressing vs. everyone free to express political views | 6.97 | 2.79 |
| 4. In the country, voters discuss politics with people they know before deciding how to vote | 6.51 | 2.60 |
| 5. In the country, national elections are free and fair | 6.33 | 2.94 |
| 1. In the country, the government explains its decisions to voters | 3.67 | 2.68 |
| 2. In the country, the government protects all citizens against poverty | 2.86 | 2.62 |
| 3. In the country, the government takes measures to reduce differences in income levels | 2.86 | 2.56 |

Polish democracy ought to be evaluated as “satisfactory” when juxtaposed with major Western European democracies, and “good” when the comparative context is limited to core CEE and South European countries. The DAP and other, similar enterprises (such as the Bertelsmann Transformation Index and the Rule of Law Index) evidently point out that (a) Poland has become one of the two or three most qualitative democracies in the CEE region, and (b) its pace of improvement is – relative to other countries in the region and the European South – quite impressive.

Now, for the overall assessments: first, there is very little that remains to be improved as far as basic civil and political rights are concerned. What can still be upgraded in this domain is the situation of immigrants and aliens who do not hold Polish citizenship. On an optimistic note, Polish public opinion seems to be increasingly more tolerant and supportive of these groups. Second, as far as the quality of the rule of law is concerned, the result is rather positive, but nonetheless mixed. The dominant problem is that while formal regulations are adequate and well designed, daily practice calls for improvement. Its Achilles’ heel is the tardiness of courts’ ruling. The other evident shortcoming is the generally low effectiveness of the justice system. Third, media in Poland are definitely free and allow citizens unrestricted access to reliable information. The common deficiencies include the deprofessionalization of journalists, the massive presence of infotainment, and the weakness of print media. Private media are too dependent on private funds and public media are at times too “sensitive” to political influence. However, in a comparative CEE perspective, Polish media seem to function quite well and are definitely much more resistant to the influences of big financial power as well as immune to “political parallelism,” at least when speaking of the major newspapers and outlets.

Fourth, public administration is evaluated as overly expensive and expansive and far less effective than citizens would wish it to be. Citizens’ views do not, however, match the NIK’s (Supreme Audit Office) claims in its recent report about the state of the administration. In a nutshell, these are much more positive, claiming that most functions of the state are accomplished properly and that several innovations had been introduced in recent years aimed at opening the administration to citizens, thereby improving its effectiveness (e.g., RIA, regulatory impact assessment). Finally, the political process, which is the core of

OVERALL DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN NORMATIVE VISIONS AND EVALUATIONS OF DEMOCRACY, CEE VS. WE



electoral democracy, in particular the procedural correctness of elections, is hardly questioned by anybody. Elections of representatives are fair, free, and effective, even if participation in elections in Poland is very low. Other democratic institutions (parties and parliament), although poorly evaluated by the citizens themselves, seem to function much better today than a decade ago. Indeed, the party system shows “systemic” features, more stability, predictability, and less voter volatility. The responsiveness of politicians seems to work to the necessary extent, although what seems to be lacking are “responsible citizens,” those knowledgeable about policy dilemmas and programmatic political alternatives, and cognizant of economic constraints and – generally – the possibilities of politics.

NORMATIVE – PERFORMANCE MEAN DIFFERENCES BY DEMOCRATIC COMPONENT IN THE CEE AND WE POLITIES

| | EAST | WEST |
|--|------|------|
| 1. National elections are free and fair | 2.62 | .81 |
| 2. Voters discuss politics with people they know before deciding how to vote | 1.03 | .71 |
| 3. Different political parties offer clear alternatives to one another | 2.71 | 1.84 |
| 4. Opposition parties are free to criticize the government | 1.28 | .33 |
| 5. The media are free to criticize the government | 1.37 | .23 |
| 6. The media provide citizens with reliable information to judge the government | 3.07 | 2.25 |
| 7. The rights of minority groups are protected | 1.95 | 1.91 |
| 8. Citizens have the final say in political issues by voting directly in referendums | 3.83 | 2.62 |
| 9. The courts treat everyone the same | 5.26 | 3.09 |
| 10. Governing parties are punished in elections when they have done a bad job | 3.62 | 1.95 |
| 11. The government protects all citizens against poverty | 5.77 | 3.54 |
| 12. The government explains its decisions to voters | 5.21 | 3.44 |
| 13. The government takes measures to reduce differences in income levels | 5.52 | 2.99 |
| 14. Politicians take into account the views of other European governments | 1.16 | .70 |
| 15. Important for democracy: citizens prevented from expressing extreme vs. everyone free to express political views | -.10 | -.07 |
| 16. Important for democracy: government sticks to policies vs. changes policies in response to people | 1.08 | .79 |
| 17. Important for democracy: government formed by coalition vs. by single party | .71 | .40 |

Summing up, contemporary Europeans still view democracy through its liberal and electoral components, but output-related expectations are on the rise. Europeans do expect democracy to assure “social justice” as well. The less stable, poorer, and more fragile the democracy of a given polity, the more this is true. However, democratic citizens of the CEE countries and their Western counterparts do not differ “qualitatively” in what they expect from democracy; they do differ more in terms of how they evaluate the performance of their democracies. In this respect, the results are pretty logical. So are the data presented for particular CEE societies – Czechs, Bulgarians, Poles, Hungarians, and the rest expect from their democracies that which is most lacking and eval-

uate their performance accordingly. Moreover, taking into account the institutional design of any given polity of CEE countries, the results presented are simply logical, which tells us that the democratic socialization of new democratic citizens is effective. Poland has featured quite well in recent years as far as its democratic credentials are concerned, in particular in a comparative CEE perspective. The important message here is that macro-comparative evaluations of the state of democracies in CEE reveal a similar overall picture to those painted by their citizens.

The author is Director of the Center for the Study of Democracy at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Warsaw.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS OF DEMOCRACIES BY WESTERN EUROPEAN CITIZENS. (FIVE MOST IMPORTANT AND THREE – LEAST IMPORTANT)

| | MEAN | SD |
|---|------|------|
| 1. In the country, national elections are free and fair | 8.20 | 2.12 |
| 2. In the country, opposition parties are free to criticize the government | 7.99 | 2.00 |
| 3. In the country, the media are free to criticize the government | 7.92 | 2.11 |
| 4. In the country, people with extreme views prevented from expressing vs. everyone free to express political views | 7.79 | 2.43 |
| 5. In the country, voters discuss politics with people they know before deciding how to vote | 6.65 | 2.24 |
| 1. In the country, the government explains its decisions to voters | 5.41 | 2.68 |
| 2. In the country, the government protects all citizens against poverty | 5.06 | 2.81 |
| 3. In the country, the government takes measures to reduce differences in income levels | 4.92 | 2.63 |

REFERENCES

- <http://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index>
- <http://bti-project.org/index>
- Hungarian developments since 2010, when the constitutional majority was secured by a single party, Orbán’s Fidesz, needs separate treatment for which the space of this chapter is too limited. At this point, let us only emphasize that currently (as of early 2014), Hungary still scores well on such democratic credentials as administrative efficiency and lack of significant court delays and corruption (even compared to the first group of countries), but performs extremely poorly as far as separation of powers, independence of the judiciary, media freedom, operation of the special secret police (TEK), and even approval of democracy are concerned (see for instance Fehér 2014; Góralczyk 2013).
- Data not shown; available upon request from the author.
- Again, numerous analyzes and computations are available upon request from the author. The analysis discussed here is part of a book to be published soon.

WHEN THE PARTY'S OVER

In reaching with our observations outside national boundaries, the twilight of the present system in politics can be seen more and more clearly. Most of the new phenomena are only marginal, but taken together they foreshadow a deep transformation of democracy. In this context, political parties – traditional vehicles of representative democracies – have been seriously challenged.

DOMINIKA KASPROWICZ

This year has been dominated by a summing-up of twenty-five years of social, economic, and political transformation in the region. A significant portion focuses on the condition of civil society and state institutions, as well as the relationship between them. In both cases, evaluations remain ambivalent, as regularly conducted research reveals an image of a quarrelsome society with a low degree of social capital, which goes along with the low quality and low efficiency of traditional institutions. These indicators are typical of the world of post-politics, post-democracy, and post-ideology.

In the world of “post,” the end of traditional agreements between society and the world of politics is accompanied by the foundation of new, often synergic enterprises, functioning on the (faint) boundary of “the social” and “the political.” This refers to the frequently created, current socio-political alternatives (SPACE, Socio-political Alternatives in Europe). They herald what Rancière has called “the end and the comeback of politics in one.” They are ventures that use the new space in relations between authorities and citizens, offering a more or less real alternative for traditional mediators, especially political parties. They take on different forms and mark their presence in the countries of our region even more strongly.

QUASI-ALTERNATIVE FOR A QUASI-PARTY

The most obvious scenario of creating an alternative for the political establishment includes the foundation of new political parties. This is characteristic of systems undergoing democratic transformation, in which populist parties, among all the new subjects, come to the fore. When compared to the consolidated democracies, Central and Eastern Europe is particular in this aspect – not only did populist parties, based on criticism of those in power, enter parliaments, they also did not disappear and, instead, became a lasting element of the political landscape. In practice, however, it is difficult to treat anti-establishment slogans mixed with demagoguery and the charisma of leaders, which have become part of mainstream politics, as an “alternative.” Is not a party presenting itself as an alternative to parties not absurd in itself? As it turns out, not really.

In 2012 the Slovak elections were dominated by a party alternative – most of the twenty-six registered committees were completely new or newly-created (as a result of a breakup or rebranding). Among them, ALaNO (Ordinary People, Extraordinary Personalities, pol. *Zwykli Ludzie, Niezwykłe Osobowości*) stands out, a quasi-party that has achieved 8.6% of the vote to become the second biggest opposition party.

The group has built its platform on complete denial of political parties’ traditional formulas. The first visible sign of this

protest was the (unsuccessful) attempt to change the election law to permit both organizations and individual candidates to compete in elections. On the electoral rolls, which were led by four former liberal politicians, there were many people from different backgrounds with divergent views, who mobilized the voters during a highly personalized campaign. The leader of ALaNO overtly admits that transformation into a political party would mean “joining the circle of (party) thieves,” hence the lack of official place of residence, coherent program, or party member structure. What he stresses, however, is the direct nature of communication with voters, who are a heterogeneous group themselves, as they mostly unite around their dislike of “corrupted elites” and non-transparent policies.

Importantly, the alternative that ALaNO creates may seem more real when compared to populist parties. Despite talking about an alternative limited to an anti-party form, it does not seem to bother voters, especially the younger representatives of a larger group of those discouraged by politics. It is worth noting that they do not constitute a negative electorate, but rather a group expressing its protest with the ballot box, even at the cost of giving their vote to an organizational and programmatic ephemera.

“OUTRAGED” POLITICIANS

Global trends, although instilled in the region, have their own dynamic, which is influenced by the social and political context. In Budapest, demands for increasing the scope of civic oversight of state institutions or the financial sector had already appeared before the memorable 2011. This was a leitmotif of alter-globalist and pro-environmental protests. Although they had made their presence known in public debate before the 2005 elections and had their continuation in 2011-2013, they did not provoke wider discussion or turn into a civic movement, either. It is worth mentioning that the second wave of the *Outrage!* movement activity in Hungary was concerned mainly with the situation of Hungarian borrowers, who are indebted in foreign currencies. An interesting fact is that in the specific national context that is dominated by the Christian Right and its radical allies, this subject was started by the authorities and, as we remember, it became one of the crucial themes of Viktor Orbán’s political campaign. Orbán has presented foreign financial institutions as the main culprits of the difficult position of more than a million households. This popular subject thus found itself at the center of political processes, but its application was in denial of the ideology of its makers, turning media attention away from them and weakening their credibility.

Equally interesting is the example of the Czech initiative Occupy Olomouc. A group of activists carried out a project of “regaining” (in this instance – literally) a space of public dialogue and initiating discussion on subjects of politics, the economy, and social policies, from October 2011 to May 2012. The symbolic center of the city was also “regained,” the square near the clock tower was to be filled with passers-by, who were encouraged to take part in the discussion. The performance did not gain the recognition of public opinion – at its peak only thirty people participated, and the admirable efforts of the organizers did not bring about the anticipated results. They were met with reactions ranging from astonishment to outrage. Criticism was directed chiefly at the subject and the form of the performance, the literal occupation of part of the

urban space, the attempt to persuade people to take part in discussions on important matters, and to integrate in the open air. All these aspects were considered “strange,” “unnecessary,” and “inappropriate for the Czech context,” and the organizers were advised to use a more official formula, for example a political party.

Of course, Occupy Olomouc is just one example of the creation of a socio-political alternative in the Czech Republic. It is especially interesting, however, as it perfectly illustrates the problem of citizens’ dependency on political parties as institutions, as well as on third sector organizations, which are perceived as having some an oligopoly on the representation of mass interests.

“NON-GOVERNMENTAL” DOES NOT MEAN APOLITICAL

Social subjects that enter intensely into the sphere of politics include non-governmental organizations, especially civic ones. They are the ones that draw people in and are usually made up of active social workers. What characterizes them are strong bonds among their members and identification with the targets and subjects touched on in the public sphere.

The consequences of the transfer of social capital to the political sphere are as yet ambivalent, especially when it comes to the placement of social activists or whole organizations within the electoral and parliamentary realm. Coming out into the world of politics is tempting; it creates numerous possibilities for boosting effectiveness, such as direct influence on the legislative process, budget financing, and getting media attention. On the other hand, as many initiatives from Central Europe show in practice, this transfer plants the organizations and social initiatives in the unknown, unfriendly ground and undermines their trustworthiness. In the new context, their original postulates stemming from their disagreement with the party and the political status quo lose credibility. The organizations themselves, even if successful, do not last in the political scene even for a moment, or are unable to make an appearance at all.

There are two variants of the story of introducing social initiatives into the sphere of politics. The first is the story of success. The initiatives that sometimes do pass the electoral rubicon, and whose aim is to have a tangible impact on politics (political parties, state institutions, law), namely the group of Polish quasi-parties, alternatively called political plankton, are a good example. These are the subjects officially listed in the register of political parties, yet they function *de facto* out of the electoral and party system. These associations, trade unions, and informal organizations have transformed into political parties, seeing the change as a “necessary evil.” For them, being a party is not an objective in its own right, but an additional asset, enabling better realization of the group’s interests. Such is the case of *Związek Słowiański* (Slavic Union), *Elektorat* (Electorate), and *Lepsza Polska* (Better Poland), to name just a few. Although they remain (deliberately) in the shadow of parliamentary politics and are not financed from the budget, once they pass the formal registration border they gain media publicity, a better position in relations with state institutions, and professionalization of inward structures. They act locally and the political party gives them the chance to improve their efficiency. Such quasi-parties fill the gap between society and the state,

although to a limited extent. Their existence is also quite telling when it comes to the condition of the two sectors.

The second, negative, variant may be represented by the Hungarian movement MILLA (Million for the Liberty of Speech), which started in 2010 as a Facebook fan page. MILLA became a voicing channel for negative reactions to Orbán's restrictive politics toward the media, violation of the separation of powers, and nontransparent decision-making processes in the highest circles of power. According to the aspirations of its creators, the movement was to develop into an independent think-tank, backed by wide social support. Its role would not be limited to control functions, but would include impact on the political sphere. As reported by commentators, these decisions were made in the first stage of the movement's activity, but social support began to fade when the leaders decided to redirect this social capital into the realm of politics. The status and the fate of MILLA are now unsure, as the organization has become part of the shaping coalition of the dis-united opposition movements (Együtt-PM).

In Poland, there are several schemes of the relationship between political institutions and the professional non-governmental sector in its broad understanding. This group includes think tanks with official connections to politics, such as the Sobieski Institute, the Civic Institute (Instytut Obywatelski), or youth organizations that constitute organizational and personnel backup. The counterbalance for these are control organizations such as "watch dogs," who, in order to realize their objectives, declare no connections whatsoever with the political world. Yet, the most interesting when it comes to social alternatives to politics are more distanced subjects who transgress the border between civil society and state institutions. Most of these elaborate on civil society in their programs, diagnose the current state of the country and society, and define the challenges for the government. Moreover, these organizations strive to voice their interests in the sphere of politics or by lobbying in state institutions, all in the interest of society or certain groups. These social actors often take up significant political activities, which take the form of a direct presence in elections (having candidates on party lists) or participation in advisory and consulting bodies. A

Polish example of such a movement is Kongres Kobiet (Congress of Women), which from the beginning of its existence has displayed strong political connections, characteristic of a party.

The association was founded in 2009 with, as one of its most accentuated postulates, the inclusion of women in the party candidate list. This demand was undoubtedly of a political nature and was directed at a relatively broad target, which included political parties of all types as well as the ruling class of that time. A meeting held in Warsaw in June 2013 brought about announcement of the creation of a Political Advisory Board (Rada Polityczna), which was to promote the display of women in party candidate lists. Wanda Nowicka, Vice-Marshall of the Sejm said: "The Congress of Women has been present in politics from the very beginning, and its postulates were and continue to be politic." Nevertheless, for the moment, the Congress has not set about forming a party, "limiting" itself to presenting its candidates on the party list of the coalition Europa Plus Twój Ruch (Europe Plus Your Move). The political postulates will therefore continue to emerge among other goals taken up by the association.

According to SPACE, the Congress of Women is an example of a social organization with a broad spectrum of interest, whose activity in the political sphere has been a crucial issue from the beginning. What is more, the party won the battle for a gender quota on party lists, which has shown that a social actor who not only postulates, but also proposes solutions, can permanently change the political context. Thus, congress' influence, apart from affecting the realm of social life, advances the development of rigid party structures in a "top-down" manner.

The sphere in which traditional political institutions and social interests meet is extremely prolific in new initiatives. In not-so-new democracies they constitute a symbol of a newborn configuration of the political sphere, still in the process of being shaped – a sphere which mainstream politicians are seldom-aware of.

The article is a part of SPACE (Socio-political Alternatives in Central Europe) research project, funded by the International Visegrad Fund.

The author is an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science, Pedagogical University of Cracow.

MASCULINE SLOVAKS MEET NORMATIVE POLES

LOOKING AT V4 CULTURES THROUGH THE LENS

OF GEERT HOFSTEDÉ'S

CULTURAL DIMENSIONS MODEL

PIOTR ŻAKOWIECKI

Talking about cultural differences is usually somewhat of a cliché, especially if you are talking about your neighbors, who you are quite sure you have figured out. But how much do we *really* know about them, besides some (*definitely* very amusing) stereotypes, anecdotes, and perhaps some personal acquaintances? The question applies to most nations. But then how can one compare national cultures without delving into one's neighbors' hearts and souls, studying their language, and so on?

Well, there are *ways*. One is Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions model – perhaps one of the best known, fairly controversial but still likely the most comprehensive tool for studying cross-cultural differences. In a nutshell, the model consists of six dimensions, each a dichotomy, which describe crucial features of national cultures. The model, itself first conceived in the 1970s, has withstood the test of time and (often caustic) peer review, and has been under constant development. In its most recent incarnation, the scores in each dimension range from 0 to 100, with 50 representing no clear preference. The further a score is from the mid-point, the more determined the national character is in that particular dimension.

The scores provide a picture of what the dominant culture of a particular country seems to be. For many individuals, the cultural profile of their own country seems strange. Even more so, within many countries, inter-regional cultural differences are sometimes greater than inter-national ones. Still, at a general level, the conclusions paint a rather interesting picture.

24th Economic Forum

KRYNICA, POLAND, SEPTEMBER 2 - 4, 2014

THE POST-CRISIS WORLD: TIME FOR NEW LEADERS



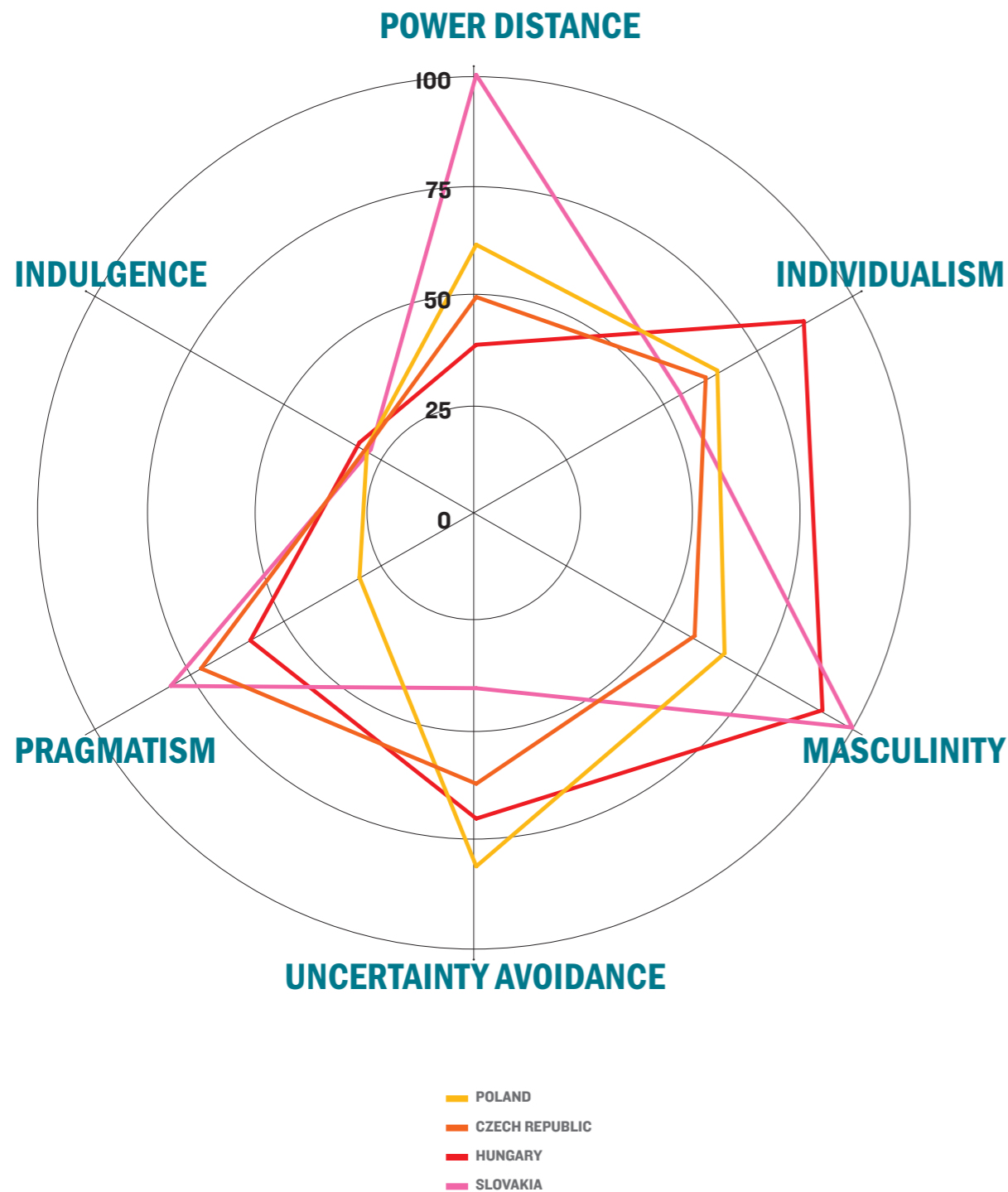
Malopolska Region
Main Partner
of the Economic Forum



The most significant conference organized for over 20 years in Central and Eastern Europe.

More than 2500 political and business leaders from over 60 countries in Europe, Asia and USA.

Over 150 debates on macroeconomics, innovation, business & management, energy & more.



GEERT HOFSTEDÉ'S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS MODEL

So what do these different dimensions tell us about the Visegrad Four?

DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO HIERARCHY

Power distance is the dimension that explains the way in which a culture makes sense of unequal distribution of power. Cultures with high power distance see power as a basic fact of society and hierarchies are of an existential nature. In cultures with lower power distance, hierarchy is just inequality of roles, established for convenience.

This dimension is where the greatest differences lie. Slovaks get top scores, which translates into a society that is inherently hierarchical and non-egalitarian. In the workplace, employees expect to be told what to do while bosses do not tend to consult their subordinates. Income distribution is usually more unequal in societies with high power distance – although Slovakia is an exception, this holds true for Poland. Hungary, on the other hand, is the only country with low power distance and – probably not incidentally – the lowest GINI index score in the region. Czechs seem undecided on this.

SOME OF US ARE MORE INDIVIDUALISTIC THAN OTHERS

Individualistic societies – the way Hofstede defines them – are basically the “Western” ones, while the cultures of South America, Africa, and Asia are essentially collectivist. The differences are considerable, but they boil down to whether one has an “I”-consciousness, or a “we”-consciousness. Central Europe proves “Western” yet again, although Slovak culture is the one in which individualism is the least pronounced. Poland and the Czech Republic are also rather individualistic, but less strongly so – in general, among European countries, only Bulgaria, Romania, and the countries of former Yugoslavia have collectivist cultures. Hungary is on the other side of the spectrum – it is quite clearly a culture in which the social framework is more loosely knit and individuals are supposed to take care of themselves. Tasks seem to prevail over relationships, while others are classified as individuals. Viewing the world in terms of in-groups and out-groups is a feature of collectivism.

A MAN'S PART OF THE WORLD

All four national cultures are clearly masculine, but Slovakia is off the chart in this respect. Masculine cultures feature strong differentiation between genders (both social and emotional), admiration for strength (instead of sympathy for weakness), as well as paternalist tendencies. Masculine cultures do not strive for work-life balance as much as the more feminine ones. They also feature more competition and assertiveness in social relations. Feminine values, such as collaboration and maintaining harmony and good relationships with others, are less prominent.

RULES ARE RULES, JUST NOT FOR EVERYONE

Uncertainty avoidance is a measure of how comfortable one feels in a situation in which there are no rules, regulations, or standards of behavior – in other words, society's tolerance for ambiguity. Slovak culture is the only one in the V4 where rules seem disposable. Slovaks seem to be more relaxed and flexible, while competition is less of a threat than fair play. Poles, on the other hand, feel insecure and rarely take the initiative when there is no formal justification for doing so. This may be related to low levels of social trust, essentially lower than

in the other V4 countries. Czechs and Hungarians are also inclined towards uncertainty avoidance, although visibly less than Poles. Strong uncertainty avoidance is actually bad for one's health – in such cultures people are more stressed out and tend to be neurotic, as well as reporting lower scores on subjective health and well being.

THOSE IMPRACTICAL POLES

In the pragmatism-normativity dimension, Poland stands out as the only non-pragmatic culture in the region. Poles are more concerned with tradition as well as seeking “absolute truths” – for them things are either “black” or “white,” grey areas seem suspicious. Poles, on the one hand, seek stability, while on the other they are fairly shortsighted and expect quick results.

Czechs and Slovaks are on the other side of the spectrum, being clearly pragmatic. In light of the theory, this translates into both perseverance and acceptance of change. The more pragmatic cultures are fine with accepting various “truths” as well as the fact that life simply is complex and there is no way of understanding it all. Hungary is a pragmatic country too, although it is somewhat less pronounced.

CENTRAL EUROPE – SAD AND GREY?

All of the V4 countries have strong inclinations towards restraint. It is – in fact – the only area in which there is full commonality. In Hofstede's terms, this translates into cynicism and pessimism, as well as perceptions of very strong social norms. Indulging oneself is often seen as inappropriate, *joie de vivre* is suppressed. People in restrained societies lack perception of control over their lives – whatever happens to them is not of their own doing. Also, their self-reported happiness tends to be lower than in countries with more indulgent cultures.

SO WHAT?

For any Central European to say that our cultures differ seems like a truism. For someone from the West, especially one who buys into the common, stereotypical idea of the region, probably less so. Indeed, there are some essential differences, despite the fact that the V4 nations share a large chunk of their respective histories. It seems perhaps most counterintuitive that Czech and Slovak cultural characteristics should be different in so many respects, given the fact that they were united for such a long time.

Hofstede's dimensions are probably most useful for managers working away from their home countries, who need to understand what makes their foreign subordinates click. Given the clear differences between the V4 national cultures, it can be quite problematic for international companies to manage regional activities in Central Europe.

One might argue that reading Hofstede's profiles amounts to nothing more than going through a glorified newspaper horoscope section; one could easily chalk it up to confirmatory bias, trying to fit the perceptions of national cultures into the framework set out by the model. Still, it is quite refreshing to confront common perceptions and stereotypes, often rather old ones, with analysis from a different angle.

The author is a social affairs analyst at *Polityka Insight*. He graduated from LSE and the National University of Singapore, and has worked for the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Poland and the Ministry for Administration and Digitisation.



Singer/PAP

The flaws in Europe's current approach to the Eastern Partnership endanger its ability to defend important interests from energy supplies to immigration challenges. It is about time Europe decides whether it wants to be recognized as a credible international actor.

BRUNO LÉTÉ

Of all the world's leading powers, none has had so much success in shaping the world around it over the last two decades as the European Union. Since the end of the Cold War, the EU has peacefully expanded to include sixteen new member states and has transformed much of its neighborhood by reducing conflicts and developing economies from the Balkans to the Baltics. In the past ten years, Europe has also made some progress in developing a coherent and effective foreign policy. The 2003 European Security Strategy did a good job at describing some of the concerns Europeans face in the wake of a global multi-lateral system. With the launch of a European Neighborhood Policy in 2004, the EU also committed to engage its immediate neighbors and create an outer ring of well-governed countries based on the values of democracy, rule of law, and respect of human rights. But against a background of the 2008 financial crunch and the EU's subsequent integration crisis, Europe's neighborhood policy has suffered. Foreign policy, it turns out, is not an independent variable. It is dependent on the economic and fiscal state of the EU as well as

A *fresh* LOOK AT THE EAST

on the status of European integration. The Arab revolutions in the south and the instability in Europe's east underline the necessity for Europe to become a better regional security provider.

EUROPE'S EASTERN NEIGHBORHOOD POLICY IS FLAWED

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the Eastern Partnership, a regional spin-off of the European Neighborhood Policy to bring prosperity and security to the countries of Eastern Europe and the southern Caucasus: Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia. The Eastern Partnership has certainly helped stabilize a turbulent region by funding socio-economic development, promoting democracy and good governance, strengthening regional energy security, and encouraging mobility between the EU and partner countries. But five years on, the objectives of the Eastern Partnership are still far from the reality. Europe's East is more divided than ever before. Democracy, rule of law, and respect for civil rights are dwindling while inefficient state institutions, high corruption, low productivity, and meager investments make the majority of these countries uncompetitive. Meanwhile, the problem of frozen conflicts remains unresolved, which imposes an air of permanent instability right at the borders of the EU.

Clearly, Europe's policy towards its East is not working as it should.

A first problem of the Eastern Partnership is that it has been too closely modeled on the European enlargement process. The current philosophy of conditionality – closer relations with the EU in return for good governance and liberal reform – is too mechanistic, and builds too much on a “one-approach-for-all” attitude that ignores partner countries' individual needs. As a result, some conditional demands made by Europe remain unaccounted for in countries such as Azerbaijan and Belarus, for whom the EU is just one among many other political and economic partners. Or in the case of countries such as Moldova and Georgia, who wish to sail a course closer to Brussels, Europe's engagement is too limited to credibly support their endeavor. Moreover, the promise of involving Eastern Partnership countries in the European integration project without offering accession to the EU is an offer that is too ambiguous as a narrative.

A second problem of the Eastern Partnership is its focus on long-term strategy and its resulting inability to create short-term action plans or to address evolving situations in partner countries. The three core incentives of the Eastern Partnership of easier travel, financial support, and better access to EU markets were all designed to function in a stable environment. But in the midst of the turmoil that marks most of the eastern neighborhood, the net output often falls short of partner countries' expectations. The six Eastern Partnership countries are still bound to strict EU visa regimes. To receive money from Brussels it often takes partner countries months to navigate complex EU procedures, while the financial amounts put on the table are dwarfed by the extent of their financial woes. Furthermore, the signing of Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements - the EU's prestigious market access initiative – demands many years of negotiations, and often this deal ultimately appears too technically demanding or too politically sensitive for part-

ner countries to implement. This rigid structure prevents the EU from making a rapid impact or shaping unforeseen developments.

ALONG CAME RUSSIA

A third problem with the Eastern Partnership is the illusion that Europe can have its go in the region without having to take into account the role of Russia. Instead, Russian president Vladimir Putin has left European diplomats looking flat-footed by plunging them into a vicious zero-sum game over the fate of Eastern Europe and the southern Caucasus. Russia's probing of European weaknesses, and Europe's difficulties in dealing with it, has successfully weakened EU strategies aimed at offering greater integration to Eastern Partnership countries in return for good governance.

The ingredients of Russia's diplomacy mix are well known: energy security, punitive trade measures, money-lending, and military might serve to keep Europe's neighbors weak and compliant. Ukraine's refusal to sign an Association Agreement with the EU in November 2013 preceded arduous border inspections and product restrictions imposed by Russia, resulting in a 25% reduction in Ukrainian trade and an estimated 11-billion-euro loss. Meanwhile, Moscow promised lower loan rates, decreased gas prices, and Gazprom debt forgiveness in return for Kyiv's loyalty. The eviction of pro-Russian president Viktor Yanukovich by democratic forces eventually led the Kremlin to resort to military force and tighten its grip on Ukraine by compromising its sovereignty in Crimea. In Armenia, another example, Russian diplomacy acted with no less ruthlessness. Faced with Moscow's threat to sell weapons to Azerbaijan – Armenia's rival – as well as a lucrative offer for cheap energy, President Serzh Sargsyan was left with no choice but to abandon his country's EU bid.

Moldova and Georgia now find themselves in a similar situation: making significant headway toward signing an EU association agreement but under intensifying pressure from Russia. In September 2013 Russian deputy prime minister Dmitri Rogozin already threatened that: “Moldova's train en route to Europe would lose its wagons in Transnistria.” And he added: “Take care not to freeze this winter,” hinting that Russia might interrupt natural gas deliveries to Moldova, which is completely energy dependent on Russia. Meanwhile, in Georgia, Moscow has begun the construction of fences to mark the unrecognized borders of the breakaway provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, leaving the territorial integrity of Georgia in dysfunction. Although both countries appear committed to signing the Association Agreement with the EU, possibly already next August 2014, the issues that prevented Ukraine from moving forward with its EU integration will also weigh heavily on Chişinău and Tbilisi.

TOWARD THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP 2.0

An immediate priority for European leaders should be taking a fresh look at how they deal with their eastern neighborhood, a region that is key to Europe's prosperity and security. As the ongoing disengagement of the United States has shifted more responsibility towards the EU, the necessity of doing so has become even clearer. Europe could re-launch a stronger Eastern Partnership policy by considering the following six proposals.

First, the EU should adopt a more pragmatic path and abandon the idea of approaching its East with a single set of

standards and procedures. Instead, Brussels could outline targeted neighborhood policies and fine-tune its approach in a way that reflects the needs of the individual partner countries.

Second, the EU must introduce more flexibility in programming and create diplomatic and financial tools that allow it to act more rapidly. In addition to negotiating lengthy Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements, the EU could bring immediate relief to partner countries by liberalizing trade on their top export products.

Third, and more importantly, Brussels simply needs to bring more money to the table to support the stability and prosperity of its eastern neighborhood, preferably with the support of the International Monetary Fund. A joint statement on Ukraine by Visegrad foreign ministers on 24 February recognized the financial aspects of European engagement as a priority.

Fourth, a new Eastern Partnership would keep Brussels' door explicitly open. The EU needs to accept that its interests will sometimes demand more engagement with partner countries, regardless of whether these countries have achieved the desired level of liberal reform. But if partner countries such as Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia achieve sufficient progress, Brussels should also be consistent, and offer the prospect of accession.

Fifth, EU member states need to become more involved in helping reform the Eastern Partnership policy, and provide Brussels with the political backing to behave like a serious geopolitical actor. Here, countries such as Germany and Poland can play an invaluable role. Their value-based foreign policy combined with their leading investment position in many of the Eastern Partnership countries can help spur modernization of these societies. Together, Germany and Poland can mobilize European support and resources, and embed their efforts in a wider EU strategy.

Sixth, and finally, the EU should not shrug its shoulders at Moscow's suspicious trade blockades or refusal to reduce its military presence in frozen conflicts. Europe must sum-

mon the courage to put economic and hard security of the region at the top of its bilateral agenda with Moscow. Russia's assertive policies aimed at challenging the efforts of Eastern Partnership countries to seek closer ties with the EU too often jeopardize the security of the region as a whole. Brussels should therefore link its Eastern Partnership objectives to the wider EU-Russia relationship. By adopting sanctions against Moscow over the Ukrainian crisis, Brussels has taken its first prudent steps to do so. Failure keep this effort going so may mean more difficulty in managing tensions with Russia over the future of Europe's East.

IT'S ALSO ABOUT EUROPE'S INTERNATIONAL CREDIBILITY

A re-designed Eastern Partnership will help the EU punch according to its weight. The flaws in Europe's current approach endanger its ability to defend its interest in a region that is important to its energy supplies and immigration challenges. Moreover, the events in Ukraine have been closely followed in all Eastern Partnership countries, where many people wonder whether the EU would be ready to help defend its European choice, if the need arises. For now Europe still inspires millions in its periphery, but it will need to do better to save its fragile credibility. In the end, the Eastern Partnership is about more than just fixing Europe's neighborhood. If the EU gets it right, it is also about sending a signal to the world that Europe is still a credible international actor.

The author is a senior program officer responsible for the foreign and security policy at the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

Buda post
A HUNGARIAN PRESS REVIEW

Want to know what's brewing in Hungary?
Find summaries of conflicting views on topical issues and search back to 2011 for names, issues, and institutions.

[HTTP://BUDAPOST.EU](http://BUDAPOST.EU)
[HTTP://BUDAPOST.DE](http://BUDAPOST.DE)



WOULD YOU CALL THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP A FAILED PROJECT?

Matthew Bryza is a former United States ambassador to Azerbaijan. He is the director of the International Centre for Defense Studies in Tallinn, Estonia, and a board member of The Jamestown Foundation based in Washington, D.C.

No way, not at all. It is a project that is ongoing, and because of it, we in the Euro-Atlantic community have arrived at a moment of clarity for our future thinking. That brings us back to the core issue, one that we have neglected in the Baltic region – where I spend a great deal of my time. We have forgotten that all the major security challenges related to the integration of the Baltic states into Europe have not been entirely resolved; these nations have formed an alliance and joined the European Union, and they think they can revert to being charming little countries without serious future problems. In the wake of the recent events in Ukraine, we see that great utility in the use of force still remains, at least in President Putin's mind. There are all sorts of ways to use the full toolkit of power for disgraceful deeds. We must recall this now, precisely because of the Eastern Partnership, because of the way President Putin has harnessed force to prevent the Eastern Partnership from achieving its goal of safeguarding Ukraine. I think the EaP is going to succeed in Georgia and in Moldova, although he will try to slow things down. I don't think these maneuvers are structured in a way that could possibly lead to their full range of objectives. What I mean is that to a country like Azerbaijan, the whole precept of more for more is not of interest, at all. In Azerbaijan they feel that: a) there is nothing to be done about the most important quest, namely

INTERVIEW WITH **MATTHEW BRYZA** ON THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP
BY WOJCIECH PRZYBYLSKI

independence for the only country situated between Russia and Iran; b) they are starting to figure out the world, and they are wealthy and strong – they are not asking for anything more from the EU, for to be treated as a partner, as an equal partner. I think that this view from Azerbaijan is a bit disturbing, given that Azerbaijan is not yet ready for full partnership in the EU, which is the whole idea of the Eastern Partnership; simply by virtue of its existence, the Eastern Partnership program is catalyzing this debate within Azerbaijan and helping the process move forward.

What will be the next big step for the Eastern Partnership?

Well, I think that maybe planning for the next big thing is on hold, but implementation is totally on track. I mean, Ukraine signed the political part of the EU's Association Agreement here in Brussels, and Georgia's signing (and Moldovan as well, I guess) has been moved from August to June. There is a huge push in these countries to get ready. So the Eastern Partnership is continuing in its implementation phase; obviously, with the loss of Armenia in the Eastern Partnership, it is a pared-down project. Thus, building on one of the most recent issues of the Brussels Forum, we are in a phase of implementation of the Eastern Partnership, rather than developing brand-new, exciting ideas, and I think that that's OK. We must finish the work we have started; but I understand you are asking about the next project of the Eastern Partnership. I don't think there is a brand-new idea at this stage. I mean, there were the six

countries. One of them is entirely side-tracked (Armenia), one temporarily side-tracked and now partially occupied, but this is going to continue. Then we have Georgia and Moldova, which will keep moving forward, and Azerbaijan, which really is not that interested. So I don't see a brand new idea, but I do see the need for some hard work, "organic work" as the catch phrase in Poland was during the 19th century; and maybe we are going to need some thinking on how to sustain reform and enthusiasm in the countries that have signed their association agreements. How do we keep the implementation process moving forward without the grand idea of actual accession to the EU? This is going to be a challenge and while it may not be a huge idea, it does deserve some thought.

Would you agree that with Maidan, Ukrainian society proved that it wants to become a member?

I don't know. I don't think that membership is necessarily the thing which is driving the best people at Maidan, but I don't know. Incidentally, I assume that what is driving Ukrainians is different from what is driving Turks. What is driving Ukrainians is the desire to belong to Europe, to be seen as belonging to Europe, and to have the ability to travel to Europe with respect – without having to go through the sometimes humiliating visa process and being looked at as unwashed and undesirable; to be fully accepted as European. And you can be European and not be in the EU, right? Look at Norway – it is totally European and not in the EU.

Turkey is different, it is not even in the Eastern Partnership; The vast majority of Turks don't care about being recognized as European. They care about not being told that they "don't have the right to join the club," which is a completely different mentality.

Is it possible to build on the experience of Eastern Partnership and change or modify the European Neighborhood Policy? What can Europe learn based on this experience with respect to the countries south of Europe?

You mean North Africa? I've never thought about that ... Generally, and maybe I'm exposing my own bias, I have never been very enthusiastic about the Mediterranean agenda that France has been pushing so hard for. I have just never been convinced that the populations there really want to be European. There is again a thin layer of elites who have studied here and who have sometimes earned their fortunes or some money here, but the vast majority of people there are not European; they don't want to be European. So I think there really is limited utility in the European model for these populations. They are unique societies – each of them – and they are different. We share universal values, of course; that is a circular judgment. But they are not looking to the European model, I think they are looking for European prosperity such as it was, still is, and will be, and they seek respect in rates that we enjoy in Europe, but I also think they want to develop in their own way.

LENNART MERI KONVERENTS

LENNART MERI CONFERENCE

25. – 27. 04. 2014 · TALLINN · ESTONIA



THE END OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The EU should stop transposing various European policies onto the field of international relations. This centralized and stiff management model does not fit the contemporary dynamic of international relations.

SPASIMIR DOMARADZKI

What has happened to the European Neighborhood Policy? It was supposed to be a comprehensive, flexible, and far-reaching idea, embedded in hope and security, elevating the value of liberal democracy. However, in the context of worrying news from the Eastern and Southern flanks of the European Union's borders, and the falling into chaos, insecurity, and political instability of such a key Eastern neighbor as Ukraine, as well as the political turmoil, chaos, and insecurity of the countries of the Middle East, it seems necessary to reflect. Why Europe does not recognize these contemporary threats, instead of existing in a state of self-adoration that constitutes unending lethargy? Why is it that while waves of trouble flood the nearest EU shores, Europe seems unwilling to shape reality according to its own interests?

It is commonly accepted that the Eastern Partnership is a natural extension of the European Neighborhood Policy and therefore relies on the same conceptual presumptions. The ENP aims “to achieve the closest possible political association and the greatest possible degree of economic integration. This goal builds on common interests and on values – democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and social cohesion,” [official ENP website]. In other words, the concept that was adopted on the eve of the biggest European enlargement assumed the limits of its enlargement capacity, without any deeper discussion on the future shape of Europe. A policy was thereby introduced that *de facto* introduces a strict selection of the countries around the EU.

The EU clearly distinguishes between the enlargement and neighborhood policies. The latter presumes that a country sees its future in a united Europe, and the second, despite its liberally polished rhetoric, sentences a country, in the best case, to the role of close satellite. The best example of this is the ongoing, six-month-long, political drama in Ukraine. The lack of integration prospects deprived even the most ardent supporters of the Ukrainian quest for the West of argument. Their struggle was against the existing political system, rather than pro-European. The ENP is not ready to stimulate change because it does not rely on the true transformative force of European integration, namely welfare and stability achieved through reliance on liberal values. Instead, it turns out to be a poorly crafted and unskillfully hidden attempt to impose a selected list of European legislative restrictions that will unevenly distribute the benefits of cooperation between the stronger (EU) and poorer (ENP/EaP) states.

The ENP's original sin

The (un)intended goal of the ENP is the delimitation of the borders of European integration. Romano Prodi spoke of that in 2002, in referring to the “ring of friends” surrounding the EU. This concept is nothing but a neocolonial approach awkwardly taken from the neo-imperial “close abroad” doctrine of Moscow (recently replaced by the “brotherhood” concept). Even if we accept that such an approach seemed rational from the perspective of the 2004 and 2007 enlargements, it has become outdated and inapplicable in the contemporary international reality. This is the case not because Europe is hesitant to accept new member states (I am not talking here about states that are altogether the size of an average European capital, because their membership is practically unnoticeable), but rather because, in the last decade, many changes have taken place in the interests, aims, rhetoric, threats, and alternatives for all players in international relations.

One of the main principles of the ENP, conditionality, presumes that EU partners will be able to benefit from this policy, depending on the power of their own determination. The more they are involved in the EU, the more Brussels will give them. However, this logic completely neglects the inescapable fact that the most the EU can bestow on such states is the approval to be loved. It is difficult to have a strong relationship based on such a presumption, especially given that as time has proven, the main players' attractiveness in inter-

national relations is changeable. Just as it is between people, yesterday's attraction can become today's repulsion.

Another of the ENP's principles – individual approach – assumes a personalized relationship with each of the EPS's beneficiaries. Although this seems to be rooted in strong logic, it brings the pompous ENP down to the role of mere symbol, loosely binding the same attitude toward countries as unlike as Georgia and Egypt. Ultimately, it is completely different to talk about European values with Michail Saakashvili or even Bidzina Ivanishvili, on the one hand, and with former president Morsi, on the other.

Furthermore, ENP principles rely on an indisputable conviction of the superiority of the EU over neighboring states, which will naturally give their all to receive and implement the European values that have led to Western European peace and progress. Bearing in mind the economic crisis, growing xenophobia, and nationalism, as only a small part of the “crisis of Europe,” this presumption of superiority is unfounded. Furthermore, ten years later, it is apparent that the erosion of the EU does not serve to initiate “external Europeanization,” but rather generates growing frustration, partially as a consequence of the growing disproportion of welfare between the EU and ENP states.

Remarkably, Europe seems to be pretending that it does not see the growing threats at its borders. It refuses to acknowledge the fact that the European form of integration will have to confront a new, Eastern “integration” or, a more appropriately termed, “consolidation” model. This Moscow model is built on the enormous experience that guaranteed the continuity of the Soviet Empire. Its basic components are, as usual, disregard for human dignity, disingenuousness, manipulation, hypocrisy, provocation and creative interpretation, and the borrowing of terminology and its manipulative exploitation. Ten years ago nobody could have imagined that Europe would have to participate in a contest with Moscow to prove its attractiveness, but is that still so difficult to imagine today?

Neither fish nor fowl

As of today, the EU is not a nation-building entity. It is a centrally steered, evolutionary process of emancipating statehood facing the strong resistance of well-rooted, 19th-century national myths. On the one hand, these myths harmed Europe in many ways; on the other, they gave the masses their modernist identity. It is precisely this identity that determines a state's and its elite's behavior, when they reflect on the steps leading to integration. This nation-state experience also provides the toolbox for European quasi-foreign policy. In other words, the EU is trying to shape the reality of the 21st century with 19th-century tools.

Another weakness of the ENP is the fact that its basic principles were created beyond the experience or identity of the new EU member states, which had to adapt to them without the possibility of modifying the policy with their own experience and perception of reality. Thus was a “European Oscar Awards Ceremony” created – a gathering of the best and most glamorous states, which the rest may observe from behind the velvet ropes and only under the condition that they know how to behave.

The new member states, including Poland, found themselves in extraordinary circumstances that both provided them with new opportunities but simultaneously limited their tools in international relations to acceptable activities in the conformist unification of Europe. This explains why it is turning out to be so difficult to wake up “old” Europe and to convince it that the crippling menace from the East requires urgent action.

On the one hand, the ENP has turned out to be an emanation of openness and good will; on the other, it has not been able to escape the 19th-century Western European inclination for colonization, and the post-Cold War temptation for moralization. These tendencies, together with the EU's never-ending, deep conviction on its own attractiveness, have produced the type of policy that today is too weak, too naïve, and too idealistic.

The Polish-Swedish Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiative was crafted on the foundation of the EU experiences and possibilities of 2003. In practical terms, its main goal is to promote the expansion of the ENP to the East, not because Western Europe was afraid to face that challenge without Poland earlier, but because the Western European countries did not consider this part of Europe a natural habitat for their civilizing activities. Although the western European states will never admit it, they continue to bow to the 19th-century perception of Europe crafted in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars in Vienna. In fact, Paris and London understand their former colonies much better than they do the EaP neighbors of the EU. Until now they have never had to – that was Russia's job.

This is why the Eastern Partnership turned out not to be a visionary project, but a practical extension of the ENP's principles to another group of geographical neighbors. These countries may not have been of interest to western European states, but they were in line with German dreams for economic domination, and met Central European expectations for a common European policy towards the East.

Ultimately, the Eastern Partnership has proven to be a failure, not because no association agreements have been signed yet, or because Armenia decided to resign from enhancing relations with the EU, or because Belarus is consciously ig-

noring the initiative, but because the narcissistic intoxication of the EU has subdued the need for a sober analysis of reality – because the behavior of potential partners was (and still is) ignored and the authorities often have nothing in common with the residual values of the ENP. It took bloodshed in Kyiv to force Europe to see the reality east of its border, but even so it may be doubtful that Brussels understands it. Furthermore, because of its passive attitude, Brussels has, in practice, tacitly accepted double standards and trivialized its own values in the face of goods that can be traded. “Release Tymoshenko and we will sign the agreement” such a philosophy not only reveals the hypocrisy that Moscow has so efficiently been exploiting in its propaganda recently, but also undermines the fundamentals of the idea of European integration. Why do these values apply to some countries and not to others? Some might say that was behind the introduction of the principle of conditionality – more for more. Unfortunately, it is precisely this principle that caters to politicians such as Viktor Yanukovich – to whom values (in the European sense) mean nothing. They are not drawn by the prospect of respect for human dignity and freedom, but by guarantees of personal welfare. Such welfare can, however, be achieved without the EU.

Remarkably, in facing Putin's disdain – part and parcel of his oligarchic approach – for European values, the European states prefer to hide behind the procedure that they themselves seem not to believe in. The argument that Yanukovich was “a democratically elected president of Ukraine” does not protect European values, just as it did not protect Europe in 1933.

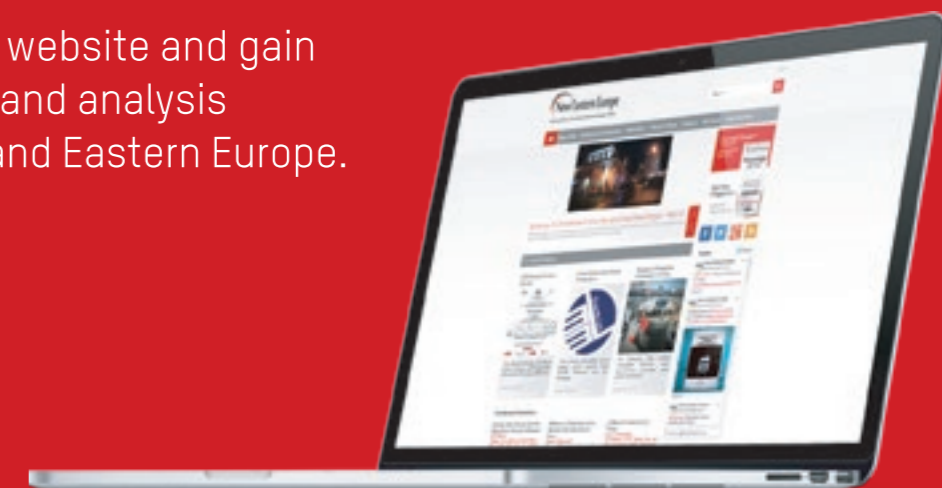
The words spoken by the Undersecretary for European Affairs Victoria Nuland about the EU, capture the quintessence of the ENP: artificial, inflexible, and selfish, built on confidence in its own superiority and attractiveness, and the cause of atrophy and torpor instead of dynamism and awareness. The basic principles of the ENP are akin to the EU's internal policies rather than the Monroe Doctrine, because they do not take into consideration a realist approach to international relations. It is worth asking why the Americans resisted the temptation to establish their own Neighborhood Policy? The prospect of an unquestionably democratic Western hemi-

NEW EASTERN EUROPE GOT A FACELIFT

Visit us online to see our new website and gain access to in-depth coverage and analysis of ongoing events in Central and Eastern Europe.

Print subscribers can now also access our digital archive through our new web site.

www.neweasterneurope.eu



sphere would probably have been at least as enticing as the ENP was. Surprisingly, even the strongest military power recognized that no one template can be used in countries as diverse as Mexico and Cuba. American politicians did not pursue such an endeavor because, despite their political differences, they feel responsible for the country. This responsibility requires prudence and deliberation. However, in Brussels, such traits are not in play. For whom is the ENP responsible? For the member states? For the interests of some of the member states? For the welfare of Europeans? Or perhaps it is merely an activity designed to ensure the EU's existence does not go unnoticed?

If the main aim of the Eastern trajectory of the ENP was to anchor the post-Soviet European countries in the reality constructed by Brussels, then its implementation has been a complete failure. It is clear that in such case the post-Soviet reality has not been accurately perceived, nor has the role of Moscow or the oligarchic dependencies. It was acknowledged already at the beginning of the Eastern Partnership, albeit in a subdued voice, that financial resources are "modest." Such diplomatic language simply hides the fact that these resources were miserable. Often, the grant recipients were the NGOs of EU member states that cooperated with the NGOs of EaP member states. Undoubtedly, the activity of these organizations will leave a certain mark, but they have no chance of taking on the political-oligarchic system in a meaningful way. What drove the winds of change in Ukraine was not the attractiveness of the Eastern Partnership, and surely not the prospect of European integration, but the limits of human tolerance for an inhumane reality.

The path toward effective international relations' leadership by the EU is long. The nation state's foreign policy toolbox still determines the abilities of the EU around the world. Recent EU activities prove that no significant changes will occur in the mechanisms that shape European international activity. The EU should, therefore, for its own sake, address the question: has it reached the optimal point in developing its geopolitical borders, or will it continue to promote its readiness for territorial expansion? This question must be resolved; only then will relations with other players become more comprehensible and predictable, and therefore stronger. The EU should abandon its own self-admiration and move toward the conscious pursuit of its appropriate role in the world.

The author is a lecturer of politics and international relations at Lazarski University in Warsaw.



DELUGE OF BOOKS

KATARÍNA KUCBELOVÁ

The book market has heated up considerably over the past decade. Direct contact between readers and writers, as well as the reduced cost of publishing, have resulted in a glut affecting many aspects of the market. The Visegrad Four countries are no longer perpetual moaners, publishing books is now much easier, the number of writers continues to grow, and literary life has intensified and speeded up. We seem to be living in great times, but is this really such a good thing?

I have devoted much time and energy over the past few years to establishing a literary award for original Slovak fiction, the Anasoft Litera Prize. Right from the outset we decided to stick to the KISS principle (Keep it Simple, Stupid!). The basic rule we followed is that every original work of fiction published the previous year, qualifies. We decided to eliminate the nomination process for a reason: Slovakia is a small country, its book market is correspondingly small, and so is the number of books published. In our first year, we had sixty-three books to consider. In less than ten years, the situation has changed radically. Last year, Slovak writers produced 194 first editions of novels, novellas, and short story collections. The media rejoice, heaping praise on our literary prize. I am sorry to say, however, that

we cannot take credit for this – all we do is keep an eye on what is being published.

At first glance there is no logic to this state of affairs. Writers have not enjoyed an increase in status in my country's social hierarchy. The opinion-forming media in Slovakia engage in serious debates as to whether artists "should be asking for state handouts." The implication is that writers ought to write only if their books can pay for themselves or if they can subsidize their hobby themselves. As a matter of fact, only a tiny percentage of bestselling authors make a living from their writing. The electronic media are awash with bloggers and Slovakia's leading daily, *SME*, is amazed at the enormous number of people willing to write for free. There is a widespread belief that you do not need printed books to reach readers. Newspapers stopped printing literary supplements long ago and we have had to contend with the fact that all the Slovak television stations devote a total of thirty minutes per month to literature altogether. Last year, publishers struggled to recover from massive losses incurred due to fraud perpetrated by a distribution company, which also affected authors' earnings.

Opinion polls show that very few people in Slovakia read books and, what is even worse, further research has indicated that the new generation coming of age has real difficulty understanding written texts. At the same time, audiovisual

literacy has grown: today, modern technology enables anyone to shoot a film on a mobile phone or an affordable camera, and even schoolchildren can use basic editing software. So how is it that a published book still counts for something in a small country that boasts hundreds or even thousands of writers?

The ratio of female to male writers has gone up from one-half to two-thirds. Although this may say something about popular genres and their readers, it does not really answer every question. While the number of female authors has increased fourfold, the number of male authors has doubled. Nevertheless, academics and literary critics would dismiss this emphasis on figures. They would say that the number of works of so-called "high literature" has not increased, and some might even insist that the only good literature was written in the past, although the number of Slovak writers who have made an impression on world literature belies that claim. Of course, the fact that books are written purely for entertainment is not entirely dispiriting. From the point of view of booksellers, however, the fuzzy line between those books with a lifespan of a popular monthly, on the one hand, and literature whose reader appeal lasts for years or decades on the other, favors books with a shorter shelf life. In the past decade, books have become lifestyle products and have acquired trophy status.

While the market is flexible enough to accommodate this development, we wrestle with the potential ramifications of these changes. We can rest assured that they will not be reflected in the quality or quantity of the best literary output. Nevertheless, rather than consisting solely of high fliers, literature is a vast breeding ground and a living community. A huge amount of literary trash with a short shelf life devalues quality and results in new kinds of demands being placed on writers. Literary life has become more democratic, the importance of intermediaries such as the media is decreasing, and critical discussion carries less and less weight. Authors can now reach out to their followers directly and today it is just as absurd to wait for an authority to declare someone a writer as it is to recall that only ten years ago, self-promotion was regarded as demeaning for an author. Direct contact between readers and writers has changed the world of literature, the market, writers, and books. Something is happening and we ought to sit up and take notice.

The author is a Slovak poet, culture manager, and editor of *Visegrad Insight*. She has written four books of poetry and founded the Anasoft litera award.

WE KNOW THAT WE ——— READ BUT WE DON'T KNOW WHAT WE READ

PETR MINARIK

Every year, Professor Jiří Trávniček and his team of academics at the Czech National Library embark on a laudable, albeit dubious quest to discover the reading habits of the Czech population. In other words, they aim to find out how many books people have read in any given year. As is customary with studies of this kind, the data are examined and classified according to age, education, region, etc. Predictably, the result is displayed in the form of spreadsheets boasting masses of data. The problem is that nobody knows what to do with this data or, to sound more erudite, how to interpret it.

The latest good news is that over 80% of adults in the Czech Republic have read at least one book over the past year. However, the hard statistical data does not tell us what book it was. It might have been the revised edition of Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, or it might just as easily have been an operating manual for a washing machine. In our postmodern times, when texts are just variations whose meanings are hidden within them, it is a moot point that, strictly speaking, the message contained in an Italian semiotician's work can be just as profound

as tips on descaling your family's white goods.

We know that we read but we have no idea what we read. The implications of this seemingly banal academic finding are much more wide-ranging than may appear at first sight. Of course, we can survive without knowing that this or that particular writer is especially popular in this or that part of the country, or that readers in this or that region prefer crime stories to chick lit. What matters is that when most people are not well read and no longer share a love of literature, it is easy to lose one's moorings.

All of you will have heard the names of Hašek, Čapek, Hrabal, and Kundera, but they have no successors today. Not that they do not exist in terms of quality of writing; that would be treating these four gentlemen with excessive reverence. The problem is that nobody knows who their successors are. By contrast, in the 20th century (not to mention the previous century) successive generations of major writers were renowned, and not only for their literary output; men of letters were also involved outside the literary realm.

In order to succeed, politicians had to be well versed in literature and it was works of literature that helped them take the temperature and gauge the mood of

society. Today, when this role has been taken over by opinion polls, politicians no longer feel the need to read. It was in novels that both Lenin and Masaryk sought the answer to the challenges of the day, not to mention the fact that a good politician was expected to be a writer. In Vienna, at the turn of the 20th century, political events were covered by theater plays instead of newspaper articles. Admittedly, this kind of literature caused a lot of damage, but there is a proverb that sums it up quite neatly: "Nothing ventured, nothing gained."

Pages and pages of future books are churned out by printing presses, assembled by binders, and delivered to bookshops. The numbers of books and the subjects they deal with keep growing. We do not know if our neighbors read cookery books or F. Scott Fitzgerald, so to be on the safe side we talk to them about football or politics, things everyone is supposed to know about. Lost in the excessive chaos and meaninglessness of literature, we leave the answers to key questions to other professions. We no longer learn about our world from stories and metaphors, we do not listen to distinctive voices that exhibit signs of hard thinking. To find out about how we live now and will live in the future, we look to opinion polls that speak a unified language requiring no interpretation.

If all this sounds like nostalgia for the past glory of the written word, so be it. It probably is, to some extent. Spreadsheet compilations of opinion polls are undoubtedly more accurate than Dostoevsky, except that they leave no room for interpretation and shared experience. Data is data: more than 80% of Czechs, Moravians, and Silesians indisputably read at least one book per year, so there's no reason to feel depressed.

The author is the publisher at Větrné mlýny publishing house.

TEXT DUMPING

Text dumping means saturating the market with cheap products. In this case a massive deluge of texts. The Hungarian "dömping" is a phonetic version of the English "dumping."



Photo: Szabolcs Mátys

INTERVIEW WITH **GÉZA MORCSÁNYI**

BY LILA PROICS

Géza Morcsányi is a translator, university professor, dramaturge, and has been director of the Magvető Kiadó publishing house since 1995. Since 1955,

Magvető Kiadó has dealt primarily with contemporary domestic literature, including the works of Imre Kertész, Péter Esterházy, and Pál Závada, as well as other illustrious writers. Additionally, it has also published a number of works in contemporary world literature, among them books by Andrzej Stasiuk, Ludmila Ulitskaya, Michel Houellebecq, and Thomas Pynchon.

In the current critical economic situation, in a weakening educational and deteriorating cultural structure, when according to multiple assessments there is ever increasing functional illiteracy and when users are reading ever shorter texts on the Internet, there is a great deal of literary – or purportedly literary – text being generated.

Is text dumping noticeable at Magvető Kiadó?

I consider myself lucky, because since I've been working just at Magvető, there has always been and still is "text dumping." We receive a huge amount of manuscripts, poetry, and prose alike. I don't detect any particular change in the common standard of incoming manuscripts, as there is barely ever anything of interest, from a publishing standpoint, in the manuscripts that come in "off the street," namely among manuscripts by purely amateur writers. The vast majority of these are the product of that basic human desire to share experience, which has brought about the rampant texts, blogs, and comments on the Internet. I rather see a decisive change in the fact that – speaking with a certain amount of resignation – slowly, more people are writing than reading – at least literature.

In neighboring countries, more books of literature are being published every year. Is that the tendency in Hungary as well?

We don't have reliable data about that, primarily because literature is not a separate genre in book statistics. A television celebrity's patched-together novel falls into the same "fiction" category as, for example, the new translation of *Ulysses*. In addition, there has been a recession in the book market during the past few years in Hungary (with the exception of children's books); turnover has decreased and as likely as not the number of titles has too, as has the number of copies. With regard to the sector of books we call literature, according to my sense the number of published books ("titles," in publishing lingo) has not decreased, but the number of copies and turnover have gone into sharp decline. But I'm almost certain that no single manuscript with even the most minimal literary value remains unpublished. (And this has been the case for a very long time, although it may come to an end in the coming decade.)

If so, what would be the reason for that?

First of all, what is typical of business is true of publishing: in fortunate circumstances, relatively large profits can be generated with relatively small investment. And because it's becoming increasingly difficult to predict what will be successful. Fortune favors the brave, anyway. Additionally, there is still a (book) industry structure in place – no matter how creaky – that bombards the audience with newer and newer mountains of books. To put it mildly, I don't find it out of the question that in one or two decades books (and mainly literature) as a mass product may simply lose their audience, and/or that the aforementioned structure may become unfinanceable. But for now the system that supports and finances writing and writers and helps out publishing is still powerful enough (although differently so in western Europe than here).

Are there more first-time authors? What kinds of texts do they typically write?

I don't feel that there are more first-time authors, but there aren't few, that's for sure. My impression is that they typically write poetry and stories. And of course, since it has become commonplace in the last two decades in professional circles for everyone to harp: readers want stories, it's the end of the postmodern, we need novels, and so on, one has the tendency to think that young writers are taking that into account. (Except for those who don't.) Perhaps contributing factors include that the canon is crumbling, nice and slowly, there is more and more of an "eb ura fakó"¹ kind of literary, political, and roadside outcry at the canon, the commercial book industry is bringing new or seemingly new genres into fashion, etc.

Do you keep track of the (literary) products of other publishers? What kind of directions do you see in publishing strategy?

Of course, naturally I watch my colleagues' work, if only because I love to read, first and foremost. I see that it's becoming more mixed, there is less and less room for squeamishness. A large part of the enormous quantity of books of literature belongs – in the business sense – in the "unmarketable" category. So: "Thrift, thrift, Horatio," as Hamlet said.

To what extent have e-books become assimilated in Hungary, how do you see it?

Little: e-books represent a negligible portion of book turnover, so this line of business is just swallowing money for now, and the punitive VAT fee is not helping matters.

In any case, the same tendencies that prevail on the conventional market also prevail in this tiny area.

Translated by Vera Schulmann

The author is a Hungarian theater critic and journalist at Tilos Rádió.

REFERENCES

1. Translator's note: A now famous phrase said by Miklós Berceányi prior to the second dethronement of Habsburg Emperor Josef I in 1707. The literal meaning approximates, "The lord of dogs is a dog." In other words, Josef I is a dog who should rule over other dogs, which the Hungarians are not. Today, it is used to signify the overthrow of the ruling order, or, in this case, the overthrow of the literary canon.

ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD

PRZEMYSŁAW WITKOWSKI

If we were to assess the level of readership in Poland through the prism of the number of literary prizes that are awarded there, it might be concluded that we are looking at a reader's paradise. Large sums of money for the winners of numerous literary awards, multiple categories, local authorities bidding to grant more funds, all this could be seen as indicating a boom of the book market in Poland. Unfortunately, the reality is the opposite.

Both local governments and newspapers compete in the creation of new literary awards. The Gdynia Literary Prize, the Angelus Central European Prize in Literature, the Nike Literary Award, "Polityka" Passport, the Wrocław Silesius Poetry Award, and the Warsaw Literary Award are just a few of the dozens of large and small literary "laurels." Under some, by winning the "book of the year" title, aside from prestige, an author may receive up to 150,000 zlotys (35,000 euros), which, under Polish conditions and the rates applicable in the Polish literary world, is simply a staggering sum.

Unfortunately, this apparent boom conceals the reality. Books are not a particularly salable commodity in Poland. Publishing houses stopped issuing information on the number of copies printed in books long ago, as these numbers would make you laugh rather than encourage you to purchase the book. Volumes of poetry are even worse off: the average number of printed copies is 500. In a country of 38 million, that is less than a drop in the ocean. Every year we encounter the fall of another literary magazine, unable to survive the lack of

support from the Ministry of Culture. Forced to regularly take part in competitions, they have no guarantee that in the next quarter they will continue to be published, and their editions do not exceed 1,500-2,000 copies.

Local governments have cut spending on culture, a phenomenon that is particularly visible in these times of global economic crisis. "Festivalizations" of culture by local authorities and the Ministry have supplanted permanent, continual, bottom-up support by local cultural initiatives. New literary prizes are just a symptom of this process. Due to their great media coverage, these awards give the impression that sponsoring entities are paying special attention to the cultural field. In reality, however, this media uproar covers only lower spending and cutting, and often a complete lack of ideas in local cultural policy. It is a great deal easier to organize a contest than to create cohesive, reasonable, and long-term cultural strategies for the region.

These awards also constitute a fairly desperate attempt to make books a marketable commodity and transform authors into intellectual celebrities. This is impossible in a country where a statistical reader buys half a book a year. Only a few Polish writers are able to live on their book sales, and this is largely because a large part of their income is from translation rights and editions on the western market. Only authors of popular romance novels or cookbooks can earn decent money from sales in Poland, but of course they are never nominated for literary prizes.

Unfortunately, the multitude of awards does not translate into a joint lit-

erary hierarchy of authors. If we compare the nominees and winners of the main prizes it is easy to see that these types do not match in different prizes. Different literary milieus have become entrenched around the various awards, and the winners of these "beauty contests" are easily predictable every year. So it is with the Nike Prize, the Gdynia Award, Silesius, and the Mackiewicz Award. Quite often, the nominated books are not in any way unique or innovative, but they win the prize because a colleague is due his "share." Verdicts are often so bizarre that the poet Konrad Góra and literary critic Grzegorz Czekański created a new award, actually an anti-prize: the Pumpkin Prize. The award gala takes place in the middle of the day, just before Christmas, on the street, and the ceremonial laudation is cooked pumpkin cream soup, which is awarded to the winners, for those who are brave enough to attend. This prize is awarded for the worst books. The worst of the best, because the nominees are among those nominated for and winners of the most prestigious awards of the year. Czekański says: "We wanted to create a critical evaluation of literary awards and ask about their meaning and selection criteria. And also to fight for readable, clear language by literary critics. Because their language today is so strongly metaphorical and vague that it precludes the existence of objective evaluation criteria." In looking at the contemporary Polish literary scene, it is hard to disagree.

The author is a poet and writer. He holds a PhD in Political Science from University of Wrocław.



The Riga Conference 2014

Regional Security September 12 -13, 2014 Non-military Threats
 NATO Wales Summit National Library of Latvia Eastern Partnership
 Populism, Euro-Scepticism and Nationalism in Europe
 Transatlantic Bond Global Economy Energy Market

KATARZYNA DUDZIC-GRABIŃSKA

— ABOUT —

Devil's Workshop by Jáchym Topol

Chladnou zemí (Devil's Workshop) by Jáchym Topol, translated as *Warsztat diabła* from Czech to Polish by Leszek Engelking, W.A.B., 2013, 192 pp.

Not many contemporary Central European authors hold such a good position on the Polish publishing market as Jáchym Topol. There is no reason that he should not – his work takes readers into surrealistic landscapes of distorted mirrors placed between our needs and wants, between our ever-haunting history and shaky future. He has a great deal to say and gives every book lover that pleasant shiver that comes from contact with something bigger than simply a story, something with gruesome and harsh, but in a way very beautiful, aesthetics.

The Polish publishing house W.A.B. has decided to once again cooperate with Leszek Engelking (or perhaps Engelking decided to cooperate with the publishing house?), literary critic, scholar, essayist, poet, writer and, as in this case, translator. Engelking mastered the distinctive style of Topol's prose long ago, ensuring not only faithfulness to the source material, but also linguistic plasticity and freshness. It is thanks to his talent and hard work that almost everything Topol writes is published in Poland.

Warsztat diabła (Devil's Workshop), the most recent novel by Topol, takes the reader on a bumpy ride through the life story of a nameless character from Terezín, a city infamous for being a ghetto and concentration camp during the Second World War. Thanks to his contact list of rich Holocaust survivors, he manages (with some help from his uncle and young volunteers) to organize a self-sufficient commune, providing tourists to Terezín with alternative leisure activities – still dealing with the deaths of thousands of people, but in a more fun-fair way.

Topol pushes many gruesome boundaries in ways that are not at all obvious in the Polish perception of the past. The grotesquery of *Warsztat diabła* has the potential to once again open up discussion about the nature of remembrance and forgetting. And as it often happens, the slightly different Czech point of view could shed light on common history and contemporary issues. /

JAN REJŽEK

— ABOUT —

A Dog On the Road by Pavel Vilikovský

Pes na cestě (A Dog On the Road) by Pavel Vilikovský, translated as *Pes na cestě* from Slovak to Czech by Miroslav Zelinský, *Větrné mlýny* 2013, 212 pp.

Větrné mlýny, a publishing house based in the Moravian capital of Brno, has done a great job of keeping up with all that is new in contemporary Slovak fiction and presenting some of it in Czech translation as part of a series entitled, tongue-in-cheek (and in Slovak), “Česi, čítajte” (“Hey Czechs, read!”). These days we can only sigh with nostalgia for the days when most Czechs had no problem understanding the language spoken in the smaller “half” of Czechoslovakia. Thanks to the beloved theater nights broadcast from Bratislava on nationwide television every Monday, as well as popular bands such as Průdy, no dictionaries were necessary.

A recent offering from this Brno publisher is the essayistic novella *A Dog On the Road* by Pavel Vilikovský, published in Slovakia three years ago and published in Czech last autumn in Miroslav Zelinský's translation. Although the author is now in his seventies, his language is that of an angry young man who doesn't mince words in discussing the Slovaks, their rancorous chauvinism and nationalism, as well as the present-day status of writers. “It's quite obvious that a nation that's dirty up to its ears won't elect the immaculate Virgin Mary as its leader,” he wrote, almost as if he had foreseen the more worrisome times of Marian Kotleba, the recently elected governor of the Banská Bystrica region.

This is roughly the message of this caustic work, which openly cites a similarly inclined iconoclast, Thomas Bernhard, as its inspiration.

Vilikovský is not the only Slovak writer to hold a merciless mirror up to his public. He has found his followers in younger, extraordinarily talented colleagues, such as Pavol Rankov and Peter Krištúfek. But unlike them he doesn't need the huge canvas of a novel, populated with dozens of characters. His calling card is a laconic, almost aphoristic eloquence, sarcasm, and a detached view, something that present-day Czech literature is sorely lacking. But make no mistake: Vilikovský is no moralistic preacher. His narrator's musings are complemented by the story of a brief, wild, and ultimately doomed love affair between an ageing man and Margarethe, a young Austrian woman.

In the wake of his collection of short stories, *Čarovný papagáj a iné gýče (The Magic Parrot and All That Kitsch)* for which the author won the Anasoft Litera Prize in 2006 and which *Knihy Zlín* published in Czech translation six years ago, Czech readers have now received a further piece of mordant writing from one of Slovakia's most distinguished men of letters. /

Translated by Julia Sherwood

MICHAL JAREŠ

— ABOUT —

You're Writing a Poem? by Justyna Bargielska

Piszesz wiersz? (You're Writing a Poem?) by Justyna Bargielska,
translated from Polish to Czech as *Píšeš báseň?* by Lucie Zakopalová, Protimluv, 2013, 100 pp.

Although Czech readers are familiar with Justyna Bargielska's texts from literary magazines and anthologies of Polish poetry, this is the first book by "one of the most interesting contemporary Polish poets," as her translator, Lucie Zakopalová, calls her, to appear in the Czech Republic. *Píšeš báseň? (You're writing a poem?)* is a collection of poems and fiction selected from three different collections of poetry, as well as Bargielska's first book of prose miniatures, *Obsoletky (Stillbirthlets)*. In her poetry she articulates childhood traumas, reviving long-forgotten memories of an almost faded world of pre-adolescent experience. She avoids melodrama, relying instead on the seemingly simple language of a disinterested child narrator who cannot fully comprehend what is happening around her. The key word here is "seemingly," for Bargielska demonstrates a virtuosic mastery of this particular type of writing. Her primary theme is "discovering the world," i.e., life and death. It is a kind of understated, natural self-discovery, as well as the discovery of a somewhat concealed, but all the more genuine, unique, and intimate religious faith percolating beneath the torrent of words, accompanied by an authentic, childlike sense of wonder.

Another key feature of Bargielska's writing is her distinctive acceptance of death as a natural part of life, utterly devoid of melodrama. A profusion of shadows and fears related to death and dying pass through the pages of this book, like the summation of the memories of grandparents, relatives, acquaintances, and complete strangers who are no longer with us. There are also memories of miscarriages, shadows of lives that are mostly not spoken of, but which she wants to summon back to life simply because they are real. The dead have a particular place in Justyna Bargielska's writing. Hers is by no means a nostalgic or decadent lyrical poetry – she ensures that it is leavened by a healthy dose of humor and gentle sarcasm. She has found the key to expressing herself in inhabiting the world of childhood memories and an awareness of a world in which death, faith, longing, and life can coexist. It is this that makes Bargielska unique and original. /

Translated by Julia Sherwood

IVANA TARANENKOVÁ

— ABOUT —

The Saturn by Jacek Dehnel

Saturn by Jacek Dehnel (*The Saturn*),
translated from Polish to Slovak as *Saturn* by Karol Chmel. Kalligram, 2013, 216 pp.

Jacek Dehnel's novel *Saturn* was inspired by art historian Juan Jose Junquera's hypothesis that the *Black Paintings*, a series of frescoes ascribed to Francisco Goya, was in fact painted by his son Javier. Since his character remains veiled in mystery, Dehnel decided to turn this "blind spot" of history into a story of a fraught father-son relationship, characterized by fundamental alienation. In Dehnel's reading, the antagonism is not limited to the specific instance of the powerful, gargantuan figure of the painter and his melancholic son, who was doomed to a life in the shadow of his dominant father. Instead, it is presented as an archetype, part of "a treadmill, where father poisons son, son – grandson, and grandson – great-grandson, each in a different, more sophisticated way" (quoted from the English translation by Antonia Lloyd-Jones, Dedalus Books, 2013), which also marked Javier's relationship with his son Mariano. Not surprisingly, the book's title derives from the most famous painting in the cycle: *Saturn Devouring His Own Son*. For Javier, the experience of painting is an act of liberation from the suffocating influence of his father, a validation of his human and artistic independence. In a further tragic twist, it is because of the son that the paintings become part of the "great" Goya's artistic legacy. Rather than serving merely as an inspiration for the text, the *Black Paintings* become an integral part of its structure. The interplay

between Francisco and Javier's unconnected monologues – gradually joined by the voice of the grandson who treats his father with the same indolence – is interspersed with chapters that are ekphrases of individual paintings in the series. While the original and other language versions of the novel are accompanied by reproductions of the *Black Paintings*, the Slovak translation features reproductions of Goya's *Capriccios*, which have nothing to do with the text. The picture of Saturn that appears on the title page of the original is also missing from the Slovak edition.

Although *Saturn* has been labeled historical fiction, history forms only the abstract backdrop to the central father-son conflict. The female characters, too, are reduced to bland companions to their hate-filled husbands. The author uses strikingly sensual language to add authenticity to his story, which comes across quite effectively in the Slovak translation.

By focusing on the antagonistic relationship between fathers and sons, Dehnel has created a somewhat less personalized and more abstract parallel to the "books of fathers" in contemporary Slovak literature, in particular Peter Macsofsky's novel *Mykať kostlivcami (Tugging at Skeletons)* and Balla's novella *V mene otca (In the Name of the Father)*. /

Translated by Julia Sherwood

MAGDALENA MALIŃSKA

— ABOUT —

The X-s by György Spiró

Az Ikszek (The X-s) by György Spiró, translated from Hungarian to Polish as *Iksowie* by Mieczysław Dobrowolny, W.A.B., Warszawa 2013, 704 pp.

György Spiró's monumental novel *The X-s* only appeared in full Polish translation in 2013 – thirty-two years after its Hungarian appearance. The public debate it stirred, or rather the visible absence of such, shows how short the shelf life of political literature is. Just as short as the life of former demons, which are reduced to a grainy image on film. What has happened to *The X-s* over the years may serve as an important lesson in the life of contemporary literary works.

To call Spiró's novel merely a political book is obviously to underestimate the work, yet it is precisely that which precluded the publication of the novel in Poland in the 1980s, and which today evidently causes dismay and is diminishing in importance. This fact cannot be ignored, and thus what benefits may it actually imply, apart from the certain market value that stems from the attractiveness of forbidden fruit?

Firstly, *The X-s* is a piece of literary fiction about Polish intellectuals from the second half of the 19th century. It is a novel based on extensive archival research conducted by the author, also a translator and enthusiast of Polish, Czech, and Slovak literature, especially drama; a hard-working philologist devoted to Central European cultures. It is therefore a meticulous work with great historical attention to detail – a feature hardly to be found in the literary works of national writers, who are not so sensitive to our “obvious” cultural markers.

Secondly, *The X-s* is hyperbole, which is quite typical of a historical novel published in times of censorship. The work may therefore be interpreted just as it was in Hungary – as a depiction of Hungarian society of the 1970s, especially the intellectual elite of the time, and as a result, a

commentary on recent times. Character of Bogusławski is based as much on a real historical figure of Wojciech Bogusławski, director of the National Theatre, as on Tamás Major, a legendary actor and director with whom Spiró worked at the time. As a matter of fact, it was Major who, in 1983, ordered the writing of *Az Imposztor (Charlatan)* – a drama about Bogusławski, developing one of the novel's plot threads.

Polish reception of *The X-s* was marked by exceptional readings that contaminated the two aforementioned facets, relegating the work to the category of political novel. The keen interest in the text expressed by “*Literary Diary*” (“*Pamiętnik Literacki*”) was undercut by a more vociferous reading by Jerzy Robert Nowak – today a person on the fringe and of marginal importance; at the time of the book's publication, however, he was an influential intellectual and a popularizer (how ironic!) of Hungarian culture. It was Nowak who described *The X-s* as peevisly anti-Polish (he used the graceful term “Pole-Eaters,” to be more precise) and as a manifestation of a “spiteful Jewish attack” on sacred Polish values. He, thus, effectively prevented not only the publication of the book, but all further investigation into Spiró's literary work in Poland. He even managed to prevent Spiró's attendance at the Warsaw premiere of *Az Imposztor*. The line of critique presented by Nowak is also present today, yet the pluralism of political debate fortunately excludes similarly radical censorship activity. Recent heated debate in Poland about excessive demythologization of the Warsaw Uprising heroes as shown in Robert Gliński's film, may serve as an example. Times have changed but the prob-

lem has not. The exhumation of the pillars of collective imagination, whilst still lively and present, never goes unnoticed. Half the trouble occurs if this exhumation is conducted by a member of the community; he may simply be stigmatized as a traitor, plotting for the sake of the other country – even worse if the demythologization is done by an outsider. In such case, the message may simply not get through.

In telling the story of *The X-s* today, one cannot remain unaffected – just as in telling any story of literature, or of the influence of one culture on another. How immense is the role of coincidence, how great the influence of particular individuals, sometimes important only for an instant, and how strong the impact of their arbitrary choices! All right, it happened; we have *The X-s* in Polish. But why only in 2013? And what now?

Well, nothing. The transgressive power of the text has expired over the years. Commentary on the 1970s in a state under forceful occupation is valuable, but already unfamiliar. The history of Poland at the times of the Enlightenment is not a subject that could easily reach the wider public. A great epic turn? Restoration of plots made with a flourish? We've been through this both in our own literature and in translations from other languages. What remains, therefore, is entertainment (significant! We deal here with over 700 pages of great, amusing reading!) and educational value (a more gripping picture of those times would be hard to find on the contemporary Polish literary scene). And, of course, the marketing force of forbidden fruit. /

Translated by Joanna Zawada

JUDIT GÖRÖZDI

— ABOUT —

A Simple Story Comma A Hundred Pages – *the Fencing Version* by Péter Esterházy

Egyszerű történet vessző száz oldal – kardozós változat by Péter Esterházy (*A Simple Story Comma A Hundred Pages – the Fencing Version*), translated from Hungarian to Slovak as *Jednoduchý príbeh čiarka sto strán* by Renáta Deáková, Vydavateľstvo: Kalligram, 2013, 100 pp

The latest book by the Hungarian post-modernist Péter Esterházy, *A Simple Story Comma A Hundred Pages – the Fencing Version*, is his distinctive contribution to the debate about the possibilities of the genre of the historical novel at the beginning of the third millennium.

The novel is set in the “fencing period” of the second half of the 17th century, a time of Ottoman rule when Hungary was divided into three parts. The plot revolves around a meeting between the lord of a castle in Upper Hungary and the regent of the Netherlands' government in Pressburg, who brings the promise of a historical breakthrough and a “new future for Hungary.” These hopes, however, are dashed as a result of various activities unleashed and kept in motion by human weakness, which make people vulnerable to blackmail by those in power. Esterházy's answer to the question of the kinds of forces that drive history contradicts the Romantic notion of heroic self-sacrifice as well as Lukács's notion of social ineluctability. Instead, he suggests that it consists of human pettiness, manipulated in the background by the secret police acting on the inscrutable whim of those in power.

Esterházy's book casts doubt upon the possibility of creating a narrative out of past events. It does not straightforwardly meet reader expectations of a plot that provides answers to questions such as: Why did the Pressburg meeting fail? Who murdered the protagonist and for what reason? What happened first and what happened later, i.e., what is cause

and what is effect? The novel presents several options, simultaneously questioning all of them. The story has been re-told to the degree that it makes us wonder if an “objective” narrative of history is possible at all, and whether any historical (and historiographical) narrative might be just a construct based on some predetermined design.

In terms of form, the novel is structured as several layers of text: the main text is supplemented, corrected, and sometimes even supplanted by footnotes, undersigned with the writer's initials and, in the Slovak version of the novel (published in 2013), sometimes also the initials of the translator, Renáta Deáková. The result is a fascinating guessing game as to who is actually telling the story. This polyphony acquires a further intertextual dimension as quotations from world literature are incorporated into the text. Readers will recognize some of them as Slovak poetry or Slovak motifs. This layer has, however, been entirely contributed to by the translator, who has applied the author's creative method in the process of translation.

Last but not least, it is worth emphasizing some key features of the novel that counteract the gravity of the questions it raises: the use of irony, humor, and playfulness. Witty and entertaining, Péter Esterházy's text is a pleasure to read. Through the personal and historic trials and tribulations of his characters, the main message of the novel is: have fun! /

Translated by Julia Sherwood

CSABA PLÉH

— ABOUT —

Love Letter in Cuneiform Script by Tomáš Zmeškal

Milostný dopis klínovým písmem, (Love Letter in Cuneiform Script), translated from Czech to Hungarian as Az ékírásos szerelmeslevél by Borbála Csoma, Typotex 2013, 340 pp.

This is a challenging and must-read book in the style of the best, late 20th-century Czech prose writing of Hrabal and Kundera, combined with an anxiety-driven, fragmented narrative. Its underlying narrative combines oppressive Central European history full of precise historical detail, with a good amount of Orwellian newspeak and Kafkaesque, circular references to constantly changing laws thrown in.

The main protagonists' family life is broken many times by history. The innocent expert with a young baby is arrested on charges that are never clarified. Despite the rehabilitation exercises to which he is subjected, he never regains his innocence, because as the new powers-that-be, bursting with "goodwill" never stop telling him, the legal situation for his rehabilitation is constantly changing.

The Hrabal/Kundera style is apparent on two fronts. Firstly, there is the ever-understated description of the changing historical-political background. Communist cups are mentioned offhand and Russian tanks move dustily in the background, without too much fuss on the part of the narrator. On the other hand, the erotic lightness of Hrabal is apparent in a combination of authoritarian cruelty and anal eroticism. The reader re-experiences the erotic play of *Closely Observed Trains* in a much harsher setting. Eroticism ceases to be light; it takes on a politicized form.

The stories are complicated by two soft coups. Several highly-detailed, embedded stories are told as dreams, dreams that last for weeks and have a very subtle underlying message. The psychological reconstruction is simple. Someone is left by his wife. This adulterous situation is symbolized by the unhappy husband as a cloning/spying experiment, in which he learns that he never really had a wife; his partner was an assistant in a study in which Brave New Science was trying to discover the sources of evil by making him, the protagonist, a clone of Hitler. But as it goes in Eastern Europe, even this experiment was genetically contaminated, and he turns out to be the clone of a Russian soldier carrying the ashes of Hitler. This is further complicated by perspectives that alternate between actual events and dreams seen through the eyes of psychiatrists and the protagonists themselves, some of them disturbed citizens.

Zmeškal's book is full of surprises. The shifts in perspective lend it a light tone, so that it at times resembles a detective story. On the other hand, due to its clear political Kafkaesque overtones, it can be a difficult book to read, while its Czech freshness gives it a momentum that makes it hard to put down. To learn about the cuneiform aspect, one has to read it. /

RENÁTA DEÁK

— ABOUT —

The Healer by Marek Vadas

Liečiteľ (The Healer) by Marek Vadas. Translated from Slovak to Hungarian as A gyógyító by Annamária Pengő-Toth, Magyar Napló 2014, 157 pp.

In February, Slovak writer Marek Vadas' novel *The Healer*, entitled *A gyógyító / Liečiteľ* in Hungarian, was presented at the Slovak Institute in Budapest. The book was published by Magyar Napló in a translation by Annamária Pengő-Toth. The original work appeared in 2006, published by K. K. Bagala (L.C.A. Publishers Group), which publishes exclusively contemporary Slovak literature.

Vadas' novel was inspired by his African travels. It was there that he encountered such a widely different life and worldviews, which – as he himself put it – sensitized him to life's smallest quivers. He experienced how African people living in poverty are able to find their happiness in the humble everyday. They live together with their gods, and with the souls of their deceased relatives, with whom they discuss their daily thoughts and from whom they seek advice. This widely different way of living unfolds for the reader in a symbolic world. Childlike naiveté and mature wisdom call out as one in Vadas' stories. Africa's faraway world comes to life through his delightful stories, and his magical pictures enchant the reader. Death sits in the corner of the pub, a little boy is born from a book. Despite these magical elements, Vadas'

world is about the everyday; his narrator marvels at the world and imperceptibly transports the reader to the faraway continent. The spice of humor and the grotesque is not lacking in his simple and straightforward sentences.

It is no wonder that *The Healer* won the most prestigious Slovak literary award in 2007, the Anasoft Litera main prize, and that it has appeared in four editions in Slovak since then. Although it is not really typical of contemporary adult literature, Vadas' books are adorned with illustrations. The illustrations by Mário Domček – a young Slovak graphic artist – dapple the African stories with new dimensions. The book's Hungarian publication is a peculiar event, given that the impact of Slovak literature in the Hungarian context is small and its reception minimal, and few Hungarian publishers take the risk of putting a Slovak author's book on the market.

In the course of his frequent African travels, Marek Vadas became adviser to a Cameroonian king. We hope this volume will have as great a success among the Hungarian readership as its author has had with the king. /

Translated by Vera Schulmann



▲ Screenshot from
Papers, Please

THE JOYS OF OBEDIENCE. *PAPERS, PLEASE*

Computer games are a good way to formulate statements about cooperation and resistance. They create behavioral processes – rewarding certain actions and punishing others. And as such, computer games can be seen as a metaphor for power relations.

PIOTR STERCZEWSKI

The work permit is fine. The vaccination certificate is valid. The duration of stay written in the access permit is consistent with what the immigrant says. Height, weight, and the physical description from the ID supplement match what I see through a small window of my booth. I already take out my approval stamp, but with a last glance I spot that the access permit has expired two days ago. I put a red DENIED stamp on the passport and give the documents back to the im-

migrant. She protests, but I already call the next person and feel a slight sense of relief: finding a discrepancy in the papers means that I didn't overlook anything, so I won't see notification of a mistake and a penalty will not be taken from my already small wage.

Papers, Please is a computer game about being a border inspector in Arstotzka, a fictional Eastern Bloc country during the Cold War. And while the premise of the game seems absurd at first glance – why would anyone want to check documents for fun? – Lucas Pope's small yet ambitious production not only proves to be surprisingly engaging, but also manages to convey some complex ideas about the logic of living in an authoritarian state.

The game's minimalistic, pixelated graphics help set the dull, static tone of this Soviet-like reality; the main screen consists of the inside of the inspector's booth with a table for examination of documents and the general view of a grey, heavily guarded border checkpoint with its ever long queues. Just as a game world is sketched with rough lines, the player's character is barely described; at the beginning we know only that he has been drawn in a "work lottery" and moves with his four-member family to a substandard flat in the border city. The daily wage is dependent on the number of travelers processed at the checkpoint without mistakes, so the game forces the player to work quickly. Mistakes or intended breaches of the rules result in financial penalties. At the end of each day there is a screen with a tight family budget: this is the moment that provides the proper context for everyday actions at a border post. Keeping in mind that there are four people on the brink of survival living off one wage is bound to make the player more thorough in checking papers, but also more flexible when it comes to accepting bribes or engaging in other shady activities that might bring some extra money.

And such occasions do happen. While the core of the gameplay is based on clear, binary situations – the documents are either correct or not – dealing with them becomes increasingly complex because of new regulations introduced by the regime with little or no explanation. Even if you memorize all the rules and exceptions and learn to proficiently handle the torrent of IDs, certifications, permits, and supplements, the game of-

ten confronts you with extraordinary situations and offers meaningful choices, usually connected with deviation from procedures. Some are rather benign: for example, an entrepreneur asks you to give some business cards to engineers passing the border and gives you a small reward. Some are connected with regular people asking for help: a couple is fleeing another country, but only one of them has the proper papers; someone needs to enter Arstotzka to undergo surgery; a young girl asks you to reject the visa of a man who will force her into prostitution. There are also more ethically ambiguous situations: a drug dealer offers you a bribe for letting him through with contraband; a group of revolutionaries asks you to poison a regime agent. An arrest warden gives you a small bonus for deciding to detain people. All of these choices are far from obvious – violations of rules result in financial penalties, so you cannot help everyone. On the other hand, accepting bribes may be something that lets your family survive, and if you are effective enough, it may make you more capable of helping strangers in need. The choice of whether or not to cooperate with the mysterious revolutionary group is also difficult – what if their violence gets out of hand? What if they fail and expose their contacts?

It is precisely in this range of meaningful choices where *Papers, Please* has the most interesting things to say. The specific expressive potential of interactivity allows the player to be put in a complex, uncomfortable situation; enacting someone's ethical choices gives one a significantly different feeling than judging them from a safe, detached position. Lucas Pope's game succeeds in depicting the diverse forms and extent of negotiating with an institution. While many games cast the player as a superhero-like figure, for instance a ruthless revolutionary or a lone warrior against an oppressive system, the fragile position of border inspector in *Papers, Please* does not give the option of unconditional resistance. Playing a brave and generous man may be tempting, but opposing the authoritarian state can also result in a prison sentence or the death of the family. This dialectic of obedience and resistance (and – on a different level – of egoism and altruism) is what sets the basic narrative and thematic tension of *Papers, Please*, and can also be read as a statement on post-communist memory: the game world

suggests that while regimes rely on the cooperation of low- to mid-level officials, this group is also subject to oppression (which should be taken into consideration in discussions of political and moral responsibility).

A computer game, as an interactive system, is a good way to formulate statements on cooperation and resistance, as it has clever ways of making the player complicit. A game creates behavioral processes – it rewards certain actions and punishes others, and as such can be seen as a metaphor for power relations in general (some games – like *Portal* or *BioShock* – subversively use this as a plot device). *Papers, Please* and its engaging, skillfully designed gameplay rewards the players' speed and effectiveness, which in turn is designed to make them more automated and less sensitive to entrants' individual problems. In quickly scanning the documents for discrepancies under time pressure, it is easy to forget the oppression in which the player is participating. The rules are merciless and sometimes embarrassing: when someone's gender or weight stated in the documents does not seem to match what you see, you are supposed to carry out a full-body scan (remarkably similar to the infamous ones performed in airports in the U.S. until recently). On some days, you automatically deny entry to people from certain countries or confiscate passports from your fellow citizens. There is no sense in wondering about the rationale of the regime's decisions or in questioning them; you just obey and focus on not making costly mistakes. The game depicts the banality of evil rather than the obvious atrocities of an authoritarian state.

Papers, Please is not the only game to put the player in an uncomfortable or morally ambiguous role in order to provoke reflection on a certain issue. Such a premise is often used in so-called serious games (designed with purposes beyond mere entertainment, such as education or persuasion). *Sweatshop* gives you the task of managing a factory in a country with a cheap workforce, forcing you to maximize effectiveness and exploit workers as much as possible; *Unmanned* is a story about an American military drone operator and an exploration of the paradoxical situation of a person with the daily job of killing people from a safe distance; *Harpooned!* lets the player control a Japanese whaling vessel. Such games (which usually also contain some inform-

ative sections) serve as a critique of certain phenomena in a double sense of the word: as close examination and as ethical evaluation. The shared idea is to convey an intended message not only through educational info and the aesthetics of the game, but also through its mechanics. Games can, as a procedural medium, provide insight into how certain systems work and the specific positions inside those systems. *Papers, Please* achieves this by forcing the player to obey the authoritarian logic while allowing them to navigate their own way through various options of resistance.

There are, however, some aspects in which Lucas Pope's game seems to have unrealized potential. The parable-like construction of the game world certainly says something about politics in general, but on the other hand it stops short in its opportunity to say something more specific about the modern world. The Cold War era setting is a safe choice as it seems to belong altogether to the past, although similar – if not even more acute – political and ethical problems may be observed on modern borders. Would the protagonist of *Papers, Please* have different worries and dilemmas at the outer border of the European Union, at the West Bank, at Lampedusa, or at a U.S. airport? The last example is surely hinted at by the presence of a (anachronistic in the Cold War era) full-body scan, but other than that, there are not many references to contemporary issues. The author, however, has defended his choice in interviews, and it is worth noting that games openly tackling political topics have generally more mixed reception and sometimes meet distributional obstacles – such were the cases of *Endgame: Syria*, about the Syrian civil war, and the satirical *Smuggle Truck*, alluding to the U.S.-Mexican border, which were both rejected in their original form by the App Store due to their controversial content. In general though, Lucas Pope's game is successful both in terms of artistic value and critical acclaim.

Papers, Please has twenty different endings, most of them negative. One of the game's possible outcomes seems to resonate particularly well with its tone and topical complexity. It occurs when the player decides to escape the country using forged papers. Whether the inspector takes his family with him depends on the amount of money left, and the passports for relatives had to be previously

confiscated from innocent immigrants. At the border, the roles are inverted: the player's character, holding clumsily forged documents, now faces an inspector from another country. This scene underlines the expressive power of interactivity – it is compelling precisely because of the reversal of the power structure in which the player was engaged. Everything depends on the good will of the official who will most probably notice the faulty papers.

He lets the protagonist through freely.

The author is working on his PhD at the Institute of Audiovisual Arts of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, conducting research into the ideological aspect of computer games.



Celebrating V4+Japan Year

Cultural exchanges, such as classical music concerts, art exhibitions and film screenings to deepen cultural understanding. On the 10th anniversary of V4 relationship with Japan.

THE VIETNAMESE IN POLAND

Given that Vietnamese culture is one of the richest and most developed cultures in the world, it may come as a surprise that such a numerous minority is almost completely invisible on the Polish artistic and cultural scene.

EWELINA CHWIEJDA

Although information concerning the number of people of Vietnamese descent currently living in Poland is only estimated and perhaps inaccurate, as many do not have regulated legal status, most researchers agree on a number close to 30,000 people. After immigrants from the geographically and culturally related Russia and Ukraine, the Vietnamese minority is the most largest immigrant community in Poland. However, despite being a community of such significant size, they remain a group that Poles know relatively little about. Poles do not know anything about their culture and their opinions about the Vietnamese are mostly based on the widespread stereotype of “small traders,” conjuring an image that has more to do with stalls selling cheap, imported clothing in the shopping



Artur Henryk / FORNUM

center in Wólka Kosowska near Warsaw and previously the 10th-Anniversary Stadium, than with Vietnamese poetry or any other kind of art or tradition from that country.

Given that Vietnamese culture is one of the richest and most developed cultures in the world, partially attributable to its variety and regional nuances, it may come as a surprise that such a numerous minority is almost completely invisible on the Polish artistic and cultural scene. What is the reason for this? The question becomes even more interesting when we look at the fact that, in spite of the previously mentioned stereotype of Vietnamese-as-traders, Poles generally

consider the Vietnamese nice and friendly, and the Vietnamese themselves, especially those who came with the so-called first wave of migration to Poland in the 1960s and 1970s and were educated in Poland and speak Polish well, show a high level of cultural and social integration.

The Vietnamese in Warsaw (*Wietnamczycy w Warszawie*)¹ research project conducted in 2011 and 2012 by a group of students at the Institute of Sociology of Warsaw University (the author of this text among them), depicts a rather pessimistic view of the present-day cultural exchange between Poles – in this case between the inhabitants of Warsaw – and the Warsaw Vietnamese community. The promotion of Vietnamese culture and the participation of the Vietnamese

in the cultural life of Warsaw doesn't look any better. The main obstacle is the closure and the lack of flow of information between both groups, which actually affects all levels of social hierarchy from the occasional parties organized by the Vietnam Embassy, which are aimed exclusively at the Vietnamese community, to the grassroots and local initiatives that often do not allow Poles to take part for the simple reason that they are conducted only in Vietnamese. The priority of such events is to give the Vietnamese a chance to spend some time in their own circle. As one of the participants of the research admits: “The truth is that these are usually parties organized by rich Vietnamese just for themselves. It means that they have a chance to meet, drink together, eat well, and incidentally enjoy the pleasant feeling that they are doing something connected with culture, that they are not just tradesmen but can also show interest in higher culture.” Ultimately, if a small group of Poles appear at a party for Vietnamese, they are sure to have professional or personal connection with the Vietnamese minority, or they are people from mixed marriages or close friends of the Vietnamese.

A large number of the respondents claimed that the problem in organization of less low-key cultural events that would have a bigger chance of attracting a Polish audience is linked not only with a lack of funds, which is typical not only of the Vietnamese, but also – more interestingly – with a lack of time and people. Another respondent stressed the fact that current Vietnamese immigration is dominated by tradesmen focused chiefly on multiplying their profit. They devote all their time and energy to this purpose for remittances or investment in business development.

Even if we do find some assets, there is the separate question of what to present, and how. Firstly, Vietnamese culture is not uniform, it varies – sometimes considerably – by province. If we ask: “Who decides which culture do we present?” and the answer is “S/he who wields the most power,” then the question of interplay between the spheres of culture and politics arises. Other issues subsequently emerge: other questions about the influence of this interplay on the validity of the presented picture and about who is going to identify himself with a culture presented in this way. As one of the respondents put it: what is presented during these rare events organized by official Vietnamese institutions is “more a stereotype about Vietnam than what being Vietnamese is really about. And you may ask each person, I mean such ordinary Vietnamese, who comes to such a festival, is this or that really Vietnamese? And he will most likely answer that there is nothing Vietnamese here.” Here, the question arises of the paradoxical stereotyping and oversimplification of the

Vietnamese culture either by limiting it to a presentation and promotion of the most evident symbols and “catchy folklore,” or just the opposite, an over-generalization by lumping sushi, martial arts, and colorful dragons together under the common label of “Asian culture.”

Some respondents point out that we are facing this kind of phenomenon in the Festival of Five Tastes (*Festiwal Pięciu Smaków*), perhaps best known to the residents of Warsaw. Despite, as we may suppose, the sincere intentions of the organizers, the cultures of particular Asian countries are treated cursorily and constitute a mix, which as a result teaches the audience nothing new. It seems that the main focus of potential future artistic initiatives should chiefly be to disprove lies about national stereotypes and open the Vietnamese culture to Poles in a more effective way. This is significant, given the fact that better knowledge of such a numerous minority would doubtlessly enable the development of an interesting artistic collaboration and would enrich both sides with exceptional works of art and experiences.

Translated by Mateusz Kuryla

The author is a Polish art historian, currently working on her PhD at École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales on the figure of the immigrant in art.



Michal Rogala / FORNUM

REFERENCES

- Chwiejda E., Milczewska K., Waluk M., *The Vietnamese in Warsaw. Perception of Vietnamese and Polish cultures by immigrants in context of their personal biographies*, IS UW, Warsaw 2012.

WHERE STUFFED SHARKS DON'T LIVE

ON THE CZECH ARTISTIC
PUDDLE AND ITS FISH

MAREK SEČKAŘ

In his 2010 book *The \$12 Million Stuffed Shark*, the English author Don Thompson describes the contemporary art market as a crazy world populated by eccentric billionaires who are eager to spend huge amounts of money, and where objects of dubious value are often passed off as enormously valuable pieces of art. As a typical example, he takes Damien Hirst's work entitled *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, a stuffed shark marinated in formaldehyde which was sold in 2004 to the American collector Steven Cohen for the above-suggested sum. Can such a picture also be related to the Czech art market? Of course, it cannot be expected that Prague auction halls will ever resound with prices

that are regularly reached at Christie's or at Sotheby's, but the question is whether there is at least some parallel. After all, it is said that what happens in the big sea is usually repeated, on a smaller scale, in the little puddle. So what does the Czech art world look like? Does it contain any stuffed sharks? And are there any people who are willing to buy them?

THE STAR?

With regard to stuffed sharks themselves, there are none. But there is one stuffed Saddam Hussein. David Černý's 2005 work *Žralok (Shark)* refers to Hirst's *Physical Impossibility* very directly. It consists of a life-size, laminate figurine of the executed Iraqi dictator presented exactly in the same way as its more famous predecessor. It is also one of the few re-



▲ Richard Adam Gallery in Brno focuses on Czech contemporary art.

cent Czech works that created some controversy on the international scale when it was banned from an art festival held in the Belgian town of Middelkerke in 2006.

David Černý (1967) is a conspicuous personality. In fact, he is currently the only Czech artist who bears some comparison to such trademark names as Jeff Koons or Tracey Emin. He became widely known at the very beginning of his career when he came up with a rather cheeky stunt: he repainted the famous Tank No 23, purportedly the first Soviet vehicle to enter Prague during the liberation of 1945, and soon after turned into a monument, pink. The early 1990s were an auspicious time for defacing Soviet memorials, but Černý's act still led to strong reactions. The artist was arrested and the tank itself was repainted its original color. This, however, provoked the reaction of several MPs who put on dungarees and repainted the tank pink once again. In the end, Černý was released and the tank, pink ever since, was turned into a work of art and is now on display at the Military Technical Museum in Lešany.

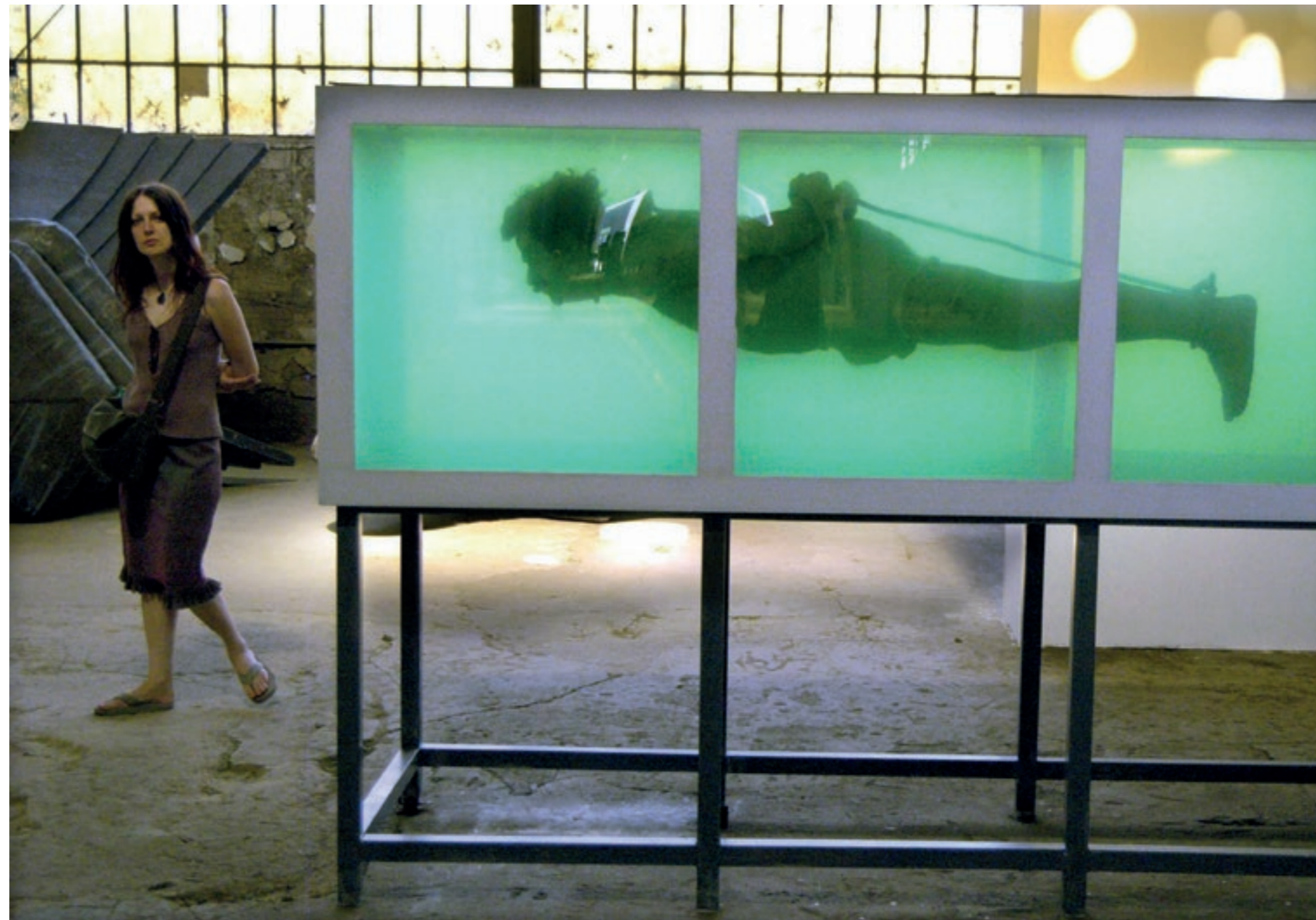
Černý has since become a successful artist able to benefit from his rebellious fame while remaining on relatively good terms with the authorities. In fact, he is very successful at obtaining official commissions. He was asked by the government to create a work that would represent the country in Brussels during its EU presidency in 2009. The very well-known sculpture *Entropa* stirred up controversies around Europe, but when we look at the work more closely, we can see how well it illustrates Černý's ability to prosper on the boundary between conformity and provocation. After protracted rigmaroles, *Entropa* ended up at the Techmania Gallery in Plzeň, which is said to have paid about ten million Czech crowns for it. Another Černý work, the famous *London Booster* (a huge model of a double decker bus provided with mechanical arms for doing push-ups, with which the Czech Republic presented itself at the Summer Olympics in London in 2012), was finally bought by the businessman and politician Andrej Babiš and now decorates a square in front of the headquarters of his company Agrofert. It must be said, however, that according to accessible information, this installation doesn't correspond to the artist's original intentions. Art works always take on a life of their own.

THE INDEPENDENT ARTIST?

In speaking about contemporary forms of live art, namely conceptualism, it is sometimes suggested that it emerged as a protest against the commodification of traditional art forms, as a reaction to the fact that irrespective of their real meaning, art works often end up in the possession of rich people who use them to enhance their social prestige. If so, such a reaction is mostly unsuccessful. Even works that can hardly be considered nice and that are not original in the least end up in sumptuous private collections just as easily as impressionist paintings and works by old masters. Absolutely everything is marketable, only depending on how it is presented and how far the artist is ready to go.

This, however, is not the only possible approach. Another way of doing things can be exemplified by Kateřina Šedá (1977), a Brno-based conceptual artist who was awarded the Jindřich Chalupský Prize (a prestigious award promoting young Czech artists) in 2005 for her project *Je to jedno (It Doesn't Matter)*, in which she let her aging grandmother make drawings of objects sold by the hardware store in which she had worked all her life. Since that time, Šedá has gradually built her reputation by further, expanding works. In 2008, she participated in the Berlin Biennale with the project *Furt dokola (Over and Over)*, in which she took several of her neighbors to Berlin and let them climb over makeshift fences, thus symbolizing the overcoming of barriers and the rekindling of neighborhood spirit in her native district of Brno-Líšeň. One could shrug over such an idea, but given the fact that Šedá was really able to persuade several dozens of villagers to do such things according to her instructions, it must be admitted that the project's declared intention (overcoming barriers between people) was definitely fulfilled, at the very least. Šedá is currently involved in several other projects, such as one called *Bedřichovice nad Temží (Bedřichovice upon Thames)*, which consists of transferring the cultural center of a Moravian village with all its activities first to the Tate Modern in London and subsequently to the Moravian Gallery in Brno.

However, such things are hardly collectible. Or they are, but then it is not real collecting; rather than that, it is gleaning, amassing any leftovers, such as photographs, drafts, and other documentation



Zdeněk Matoušek/PAP

that remain. Kateřina Šedá says that such things don't express the meaning of her work, and if they do, then they constitute a meaningful body that she is unwilling to tear apart. Such was the case of her *It Doesn't Matter* project, which comprised about seven hundred drawings and three thousand questionnaires. Šedá's Italian gallerist Franco Soffiantino assessed the price of the whole at around two million Czech crowns and planned to sell it piece by piece. Šedá, however, didn't consent to this; in fact, she didn't want to part from

the project at all. In the end, a compromise was reached: three reproductions were created, they sold well, and the artist kept the original.

In other cases, however, cooperation does not work so smoothly. Once, Soffiantino told Šedá that he had sold twenty of her "blue drawings." She objected that she had never done anything of the kind. It doesn't matter, he said, you will if you want to. This is an approach Šedá would never concede to. "I am interested in the event itself; the event is the

work of art for me," she says. "My ambition isn't to produce souvenirs in bulk. I want my projects to be perpetual, to have a life of their own. As far as my career is concerned, my goal is to change the paradigm, to find a new art form." According to Šedá, gallerists and art-dealers decide what is good and what is not, but this is often misleading. It is actually very easy for an artist to guess what gallerists are looking for and what may be easily sellable, but the true meaning of art consists of seeking new ways.

▲ David Černý, *Žralok (Shark)*

Such an approach could be used as a successful example of the above-mentioned protest against commodification. But Kateřina Šedá rather disagrees: "If there is a protest, then perhaps it consists of the fact that I don't heed the rules of the market. But I don't reject them: I simply don't care about them." Still, Šedá has to pay a price for this independent stance. In the Czech Republic, she has been bought by no more than a single collector. It is better abroad, where she is represented in several prestigious galleries and private collections. But her income from sales cannot cover even the cost of her often expensive projects. She must apply for grants and donations and, despite her undisputable fame, she definitely cannot be considered rich.

SELLERS AND BUYERS

Perhaps there is not always full agreement between Kateřina Šedá and her Italian gallerist, but Franco Soffiantino is still a man who could hardly find a counterpart on the Czech art scene. Not only does he believe in conceptual art and its marketability, he also trusts young, starting artists and is willing to invest in them. This definitely isn't the norm in the Czech Republic. And it isn't only the fact that art will never make a lot of money in such a small country. The main problem seems to be that the Czech art market is conservative. According to *Ročenka Art+*, a publication released as a yearly supplement to the magazine *Art & Antiques*, which sums up all the main events on the Czech art market, among the 157 items auctioned in 2013 whose price exceeded

one million crowns, there was only one painting which could be considered, with a pinch of salt, a work of contemporary art: a 1990 untitled canvas by Zdeněk Sýkora (1920-2012) which sold for nearly two million crowns. Of course, works by younger, truly contemporary authors also sell, sometimes, but they usually bring much lower prices. Furthermore, auction lists contain absolutely no works of conceptual art – which, by the way, contrasts with the list of nominees of the above-mentioned Jindřich Chalupický Prize, where conceptualists prevail by a huge margin.

Robert Hedervári, the owner of the Prague-based gallery Vltavín, also explains this fact with Czech collectors' conservatism. The Czech art market is still largely dominated by realistic landscape paintings, such as works by Julius Mařák and his disciples, i.e., pictures created by the end of the 19th century which could be considered "behind the times" even at the time of their origin. These are bestsellers and the safest investments. Another secure investment are Czech modern style painters of the inter-war period, but the closer we get to the present, the more investors seem to lose their guts. Moreover, it is also obvious that in the sphere of contemporary art, the established art market mechanisms cease to work. Potential buyers often choose a painting at an exhibition and then buy it directly from the author, thus skipping the gallery as an intermediary. Hedervári says that by conceding to this practice, artists are actually sawing off the branch they are sitting on: how will they

make a breakthrough, after all, if there is no gallery to exhibit their works? It is true that high quality galleries have been disappearing in the Czech Republic for several years and there are now very few of those that focus exclusively on contemporary authors. Among the galleries picked by *Art+* as the most successful in 2013, none can be classified as belonging to this category.

Robert Hedervári also says that the collector as such can be considered an endangered species in the Czech Republic. Art collecting is now generally out of fashion among the middle class and big companies are not very interested in acquisitions either. A few individuals can be found among the richest people – one such example is Vladimír Železný, once the director of the first private Czech TV channel *Nova* and later a rather peculiar politician who succeeded in amassing a very impressive collection of Czech paintings of the 1960s. This collection, however, can be hardly considered audacious or innovative. It only contains time-proven names; there is a lot of money in it, but the owner's taste or ambition is hardly detectable. In his prime, Železný was a strong player on the Czech political scene, although he definitely has not been able to stir up the art world.

THE COLLECTOR?

So who is the Czech collector? A person who is not only rich but also in love with originality and artistic independence? To put it briefly, the Czech Republic has no Charles Saatchi of its own. But this doesn't mean that there are no interesting

or influential personalities. One such example is definitely Richard Adam (1953), formerly an employee of the Czech Insurance Company, whose name became widely known approximately ten years ago. Adam has collected the works of contemporary painters since his youth; he started his activities as a mere enthusiast. He simply liked paintings, so he bought them as long as he could afford it. Soon, canvases were piling up in his small Prague studio, so much so that it became nearly uninhabitable. At that time, hardly anybody knew of him, but he became a celebrity in artistic circles. The thing was that in the 1990s, the interest in contemporary art was in steep decline. This was perhaps because one whole generation of collectors was taking its leave, or simply because of the political and economic shift taking place at the time, but the fact is that suddenly nobody was buying contemporary painters. Richard Adam was left alone on the market and it logically took control of it. At the same time, he was not only interested in owning paintings; on the contrary, he socialized with artists, supported them financially, and even paid their tabs in pubs. In return, he could have whatever he chose and was usually offered friendly prices. Step by step, he built a collection that was unparalleled throughout the country.

Adam made good use of his collecting in 2004 when he was approached by the Brno-based businessman Miroslav Lekeš, who invited him to participate in a joint venture. Together, they founded a private gallery focused on contemporary art. They agreed that the collection's core would consist of paintings in Adam's possession, but that it would keep expanding with the final objective of providing a comprehensive picture of the Czech art of the last three decades. For this purpose, a renovated factory hall, a nice example of 19th-century industrial architecture, was rented from the city of Brno and Richard Adam became the gallery's artistic director.

Adam says that the collection he operates is still in progress. The 1990s are practically complete and the 2000s are also about 75% finished. Now, he is focusing on the youngest generation, the artists who started working in 2010. The collection now comprises several hundreds of paintings and is still growing. Given its size and fame, one may ask whether the collection may still be considered truly "private." In fact, the

MOST EXPENSIVE CZECH PICTURES

57,422,500 CROWNS ▶ The most expensive Czech painting ever auctioned was *Tvar modré (Shape of Blue)*, a 1913 work of abstract Cubism by František Kupka. In 2012, it sold, purportedly to Russia, for 57,422,500 crowns

18,490,000 CROWNS ▶ The most expensive Czech painting auctioned in 2013 was *Zátiší (Still Life, 1909)* by Bohumil Kubišta; it sold for 18,490,000 crowns.

6,000,000 CROWNS ▶ The most expensive Czech painting by a post-war artist was also auctioned in 2013; it was *Dívka se švihadlem (Girl with a Skipping Rope, 1957)* by Mikuláš Medek, which reached 6,000,000 crowns

One euro is approximately 27 Czech crowns.

gallery takes on the role of institutions such as the National Gallery in Prague, which have this activity in their job description and which receive money for it from the state budget. "Contemporary art should be first collected and mapped by the National Gallery," Richard Adam argues, "but in the last fifteen years they have bought practically nothing. All the important things are here."

On the other hand, the collection has retained its "private" character, at least to a degree. While Adam aims to amass an objective and comprehensive selection, he also relies on his personal taste and is reluctant to include works by authors he dislikes, although he acknowledges their importance. Therefore, combined with the collection's renown, Richard Adam's personal likes acquire a broader meaning and may play an important role in how future generations will one day perceive our period's artistic image.

It is somewhat curious that the collection ended up in Brno, a city whose representatives are not very famous for their love of art. For that matter, the relationship between the gallery and the municipality is sometimes tense. Last year, the gallery was nearly ousted from its building when it fell behind in its rent and the city terminated its contract. The conflict was only resolved when the gallery received the support of the country's whole cultural community and the municipality was forced to give in. Currently, the situation seems stable, but it still cannot be excluded that the gallery will have to seek new shelter elsewhere. In fact, its operation costs are considerable: just the

rent paid to the city reaches 1,800,000 crowns per year. The gallery as such is a non-profit venture. It does not do trade with paintings; it earns some money by renting its space for purposes that have often little to do with the arts, but this is only enough to cover about two-thirds of its entire expenses. The rest of the money must be gained from sponsors and the gallery's operation is still supported by Miroslav Lekeš' entrepreneurial activities.

It is paradoxical that in a country whose art market can be considered very conservative, the best and most comprehensive picture of its contemporary art life is provided by a private collection. It is also paradoxical that in order to see this collection, you must avoid the country's capital, Prague, and go straight to its rather provincial "second city" of Brno. In which case you must skip the National Gallery and go to a former factory hall. But maybe all this only proves the fact that art can live and thrive regardless of cash flow, state-run institutions, and social mechanisms. Which is good. Indeed, maybe there are no sharks, live or stuffed, in the Czech artistic puddle, but there are still many interesting fish to watch.

The author is a Czech translator and writer.

STUDENT READERS! GET YOUR TEXT PUBLISHED!

COMPETITION EUR 200 FOR THE BEST ARTICLE

Seize the opportunity and contribute to *Visegrad Insight*
Impress us with your ideas and contribute to the next issue of *Visegrad Insight*.

ANSWER THE QUESTION:

What are the challenges for Central Europe?

We are looking for analyses or essays up to 15,000 characters, written in English by MA or PhD students, or recent graduates from around the world.

Entries will be assessed by the *Visegrad Insight* editorial board.

The prize for the best contribution will be awarded paid publication in the next issue of *Visegrad Insight*, out in the fall of 2014. The two runners-up will be awarded publication on the *Visegrad Insight* website.

Please send us your contribution, a brief CV, and contact information to contact@visegradinsight.eu by 1 September 2014.

ON THE EDGE OF EUROPE'S BOUNDARY

The portals of the legendary West have opened wide, and for a moment we thought we had stepped into the light. But we soon found out that although we'd like to have everything they have in the West, we just can't grasp it.

JÁNOS HÁY

When I was growing up, the portal of the legendary West was closed to us. Some light managed to filter through the keyhole, and we stood there hoping that a glimmer would reach us, too. Of course those standing closer to the keyhole got more, sometimes even in the form of a western car in place of those dilapidated socialist vehicles, while those standing farther away contented themselves with cans of beer or packs of brand-name cigarettes. These items were safeguarded, put on display, shown to friends. These weren't objects; they were symbols, tiny emblems of freedom. We were happy whenever we somehow came into possession of a shopping bag emblazoned with a western ad, with an English-language inscription; we spent fortunes buying jeans smuggled into the country; we laid out exorbitant sums in doorways for records on which it wasn't the greats of rock-n-roll we heard, but the sounds of flower power, freedom, and happiness. We were young and wanted to look like our western counterparts, we wanted to listen to music like theirs, to applaud

their ideas. The pictures of us that appeared in the foreign press showed people just as young as those on the streets of Paris, London, and New York, but the attentive observer, looking past the smuggled jeans, could immediately detect the meagerness and the fear. A shoddy pair of shoes or the shabby material of a shirt revealed the quality of our attire. A few tiny, hardly noticeable quirks in our faces betrayed everyone's subservience to the power-wielding elite. Being able to shout at concerts, carouse at school gatherings, sport long hair and jeans, all that was possible only through the largess of the elite. And if the elite happened to be in a foul mood, reason enough was found to render your life untenable, to ban you from school, from the capital, from your place of work, or to revoke your passport.

Slipping through the cracks

We sought out the light filtering through that keyhole, but our parents didn't appreciate our pursuit. They resented those westerners beyond the portal, those who, our parents told us, had made a promise when our homeland took up arms against

a powerful empire. They'd promised to come and help us: Don't give up, Hungarian brethren! But they didn't come, and my mother told me about the piles of young Hungarian bodies shot down by the soldiers of that powerful empire, about the streams of blood flowing through the streets of Budapest. I dreamt about it often; I could see the streams of blood, and I walked the boulevards and Rákóczy Avenue with dread whenever we went shopping in the capital. But parental disapproval notwithstanding, we remained in the vicinity of the light source. One of these days the portal will open, even if just a crack, we said to our buddies, and we'll slip out into that legendary world. "Like hell you will!" they'd come back at us. They didn't believe we'd ever get across. Those times were so marked by disbelief that people not only didn't believe in God and the state, they didn't believe in the possibility that one of their friends could ever get through the West's portal. But eventually, once every three years, an ever-so-slight opening did become available to obedient citizens, and we took advantage of that opportunity and slipped through the crack so that, with a bit of money and the travel discounts available to university students, we could enter that legendary world.

It was as if we'd suddenly stepped out of a black-and-white film. For no fathomable reason, the communists regarded color as an enemy of the system. Gray and faded sameness governed the environment. The farther east you ventured, the paler everything became. And along with the colors, the composition of the air also changed. I hailed from a country in which there was the smell of poor-quality toiletry products, the odor of burnt grease emanating from restaurants, and the stench of toilets combined with auto exhaust and the unregulated discharge of industrial smoke pouring out of factory chimneys. Compared to the world beyond the portal, the country I'd come from was foul smelling and grimy, bad music surged from the radio, and revolutionary marches at celebratory gatherings stirred crowds who were in no mood to be stirred. The buildings were run down, the materials execrable, the apartments and shops meager. The people who lived in these nasty houses, in that nasty smell, in that colorlessness, were not nasty – they were anguished; they were people who didn't think they had anything coming to them, who were glad they got what they got. True, they muttered about this and that, the intellectuals craved more rights, the simpler folk wanted better pay, but basically they accepted things as they were. They lived within a state-guaranteed security, in a world of modest but secure betterment, where the farthest possible reaches of the population could fill their stomachs. They still remembered the times between the two world wars when they tramped about with empty stomachs looking for work so as to be able to bring something home, some money or food. They hated that world of snobbery, in which the most inconsequential civil servant could slap a day laborer, a field hand, a working stiff, across the face, the world in which the upper crust was entitled to everything, and the rest to practically nothing.

The lights of the legendary West

Western population had food on the table, and the country – albeit by obeying strict orders – set out on the path of modernization. The new economy was in need of brainpower; moreover, the pre-war governing stratum had been

thoroughly pruned and chastened by the new regime. Uncle Stevie and Aunt Marie were needed now, as was Uncle Alex's son. The makeup and alignment of the elite changed. Yet one who got outside the portal didn't see these values, albeit he was a product of its positive discrimination, he just marveled at the lights of the legendary West, at its wealth, and at the fact that the exercise of power was not part of everyday life, that a sales clerk or a policeman didn't find it necessary to demonstrate that it's up to him whether you get served or penalized. The West appeared to be a liberated community, building upon cooperation, where people could walk the streets with heads held high, not shuffling along while staring at the tips of their shoes, like their eastern neighbors. Here, I remark to my travel partner, it's not only not forbidden to step onto the grass, it's downright compulsory. It's good to step on grass, not to mention that smoking grass is also possible. I was in a shop in Paris with a friend from there, who earlier had been a friend from here, but he left this slave country behind and became a free person. His coat swept a bottle of wine off the shelf onto the floor: What now? Nothing, he said, as he turned away and moved on.

We were on our way home. "You can feel we've crossed the border," I said, as if they'd changed the air in the compartment at the border. The old air was back. We'd almost forgotten about it in the course of a month, that thick, oily, train-smell. As a kind of added bonus to the domestic air, we were treated to the domestic border guard. No easy-going smile, as if to say, I'm sure you had a good time, but I bet you could hardly wait to come back home. Without a word he set upon our things and undid them, leaving little doubt that he was searching for something. Written on his face was a question he eventually asked out loud: "Where is it?" "What?" we asked as he tore into the tent flaps, the sleeping bag, our dirty underwear, but he didn't find the books about the miserable fate of our country that we'd bought in Paris and left with an acquaintance in Vienna, because they didn't fit in our backpacks. The authorities were so vigilant that they know who shops at that little Hungarian-language bookstore, and they were anticipating our arrival in order to confiscate the books lest we poison the Hungarian population, to expel the book bearers from university, fire them from their jobs, and isolate them as contagion

carriers. But he didn't find them and, cursing, he slammed the passports on the seat. We'd arrived.

Our homeland, I later told my buddies, will never cross its own border at Hegyeshalom, because that's forever beyond our capabilities. We'd have to step over our own shadow, or pull ourselves out of somewhere by our own hair, in other words it's a physical impossibility, because our homeland is not the realm of Baron Münchhausen. And then, bada-bing bada-boom, nobody reckoned with it, not even the best informed party hacks, not even the teacher of the "Foundations of our Worldview" course, although she really did know everything, our little country drifted over into the world of democracy, so that, within a framework established through free elections, it could reintroduce private property as the basis of a capitalist economy. There's no other possibility, they said, we have to either accept this, or keep what was, but of course "what was" has collapsed.

(...)

Always the same crop

The disintegration of the provincial industry and agriculture completely undermined the villages, the communities that even in the worst of years were able to preserve something of the by-gone world of folk tales, of the farmer's inherent strength, the joy of knowing that every year – at times less, at times more – something would come of what they had planted in the ground. Agricultural diversity, the greatest variegation of plant husbandry, was replaced by the most primitive sort of plant cultivation. Along the way to my native village, I take note of the crops. Where earlier orchards bloomed – cherry, apple, strawberry, the plantings of the dreams of my father, who was head of the local cooperative – now we see hectare after hectare of canola and sunflower, or wheat if by chance the ground hasn't been left fallow. Primitive industrial crops, all you need for them is a seeding machine, a threshing machine, and a tractor driver. The technology of agricultural production has replaced crop rotation. We sow, we reap, always the same crop. The culture of work and the culture of everyday life are siblings, as alike as two eggs, almost twins. As is

the one, so is the other; as is the quality of work, so is the quality of human relations. This is precisely the level at which the community operates. Industrial crops don't require a culture of work, nor do they require workers. As a result, the culture of everyday life in the villages has become more and more paltry, and it's no longer accurate to refer to these places as communities. There are no common labor that formerly brought together relatives and neighbors, and no system of civic connectedness has evolved. The deterioration is exacerbated by the lack of money that extends to everything. I'm watching the procession on Corpus Christi; my relatives are there, my former acquaintances, classmates, and schoolmates. On this day they wanted to look their best. They're dressed in cheap Chinese under- and outerwear, their faces are drawn; they've been marking time for years in this paralyzing absence of prospects. And there is no way out. What they see is that their children are stuck in this condition as well, that nothing will ever change, for everything has turned away from them: luck, the leaders they chose, maybe even God himself.

I ask a long-time friend where so-and-so is. "Haven't you heard?" he says, "he died last month," and he went on to list all the others close to me in age, who, in their forties, after a few years of struggle followed by a fatal illness, ended up in the graveyard. Only on paper does this village population live in Europe. While the living standards of the inhabitants of Budapest's elite districts are at the level of Europe's upper crust, and their life expect-

tancy is identical to that of their most advanced western counterparts, the village population, from the point of view of life expectancy and life prospects, education and healthcare, lives in the third world. Their counterparts cannot be found in the legendary West, but in the not-at-all legendary East, in Ukraine, Belarus, and farther, in Asian realms.

A tale of two Hungary's

These losers also take part in that democratic game that allows parties and individual representatives to get into parliament. Every four years, for a quick month, they too pop into the heads of a political elite that will do anything for power. Then this elite, like a drinker who can't recall the previous night, forgets about them for another four years, while preaching about the political bifurcation of Hungarian society, because it's in the interest of the elite to maintain the ideological tension, as well as to offer the mediocrities the possibility of securing well-paying jobs in return for party loyalty. In truth, it's *economic* bifurcation that every responsible thinker ought to have been talking about since the first years that followed the change in regime. In reality there are two Hungary's: the miserable, impoverished Hungary, despised by the well-off as an Asian horde, and the arrogant elite Hungary that lives in its green-belt reservations; between the two is the ever-shrinking middle, which can-

not serve as a bridge, because there is no bridge. There is a huge chasm whose edge can be approached only at great peril, and crossing it would be a Herculean feat. It is virtually impossible to rise up out of the lower level of Hungarian society. Being bound to the soil and social class has created a kind of modern caste system: a shrewd pseudo-democratic framework that dazzles you with the illusion that with your choices you can modify your own and the country's destiny. You can't. Not a single participant in the regime change did anything to maintain social mobility through positive discrimination. Where you have fallen, there you will remain: this became the guiding principle, whether it was spoken or not. Today, at leading universities, the number of those who came from below can't even be counted. Their experience has no way of entering the minds of the social elite. And though only members of the elite are in a position to effect change, we can expect no solidarity from them, because they don't even know what the issue is. No one with origins at the lower end of society lives where the elite lives; the two strata never interact. To a member of the elite, Hungary extends only as far as the border of his district and social group.

The greatest losers are the Roma. They live mostly in the poorest regions, where there's hardly any need even for trained labor, much less for untrained. The unscrupulous powers-that-be use them as political pawns, either in the guise of a national threat or as victims of majority racism. Each tack finds partners among the corrupt leaders of the Gypsies,

GLOBSEC is the leading annual foreign policy and security forum in the region of Central Europe and one of the world's major transatlantic conferences.

Since 2005, **GLOBSEC** has been a prestigious and vibrant platform for top politicians, diplomats, business leaders, influential experts and academics to discuss their ideas and shape foreign and security policies.



GLOBSEC

14 - 16 MAY 2014 | BRATISLAVA

GLOBSEC 2014 will focus on several pivotal issues, including:

- Putin, Russia and the Rest – Geopolitics of the Crimea Crisis
- Power Shifts: Renewing Western Leadership
- Central Europe's Growing Confidence and Competitiveness
- NATO's Raison d'Etre After the 2014 Summit
- Security and Privacy in the 21st Century

H.E. **Robert Fico**
Prime Minister of the
Slovak Republic



H.E. **Viktor Orbán**
Prime Minister of Hungary



Michael Chertoff
former U.S. Secretary of
Homeland Security



Gen. **John Allen**
former Commander of ISAF
and U.S. Forces Afghanistan



For more information, please contact: media@globsec.org



SAC
SLOVAK ATLANTIC
COMMISSION
Member of
STRATEGY COUNCIL



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF HUNGARY



Program Presidency 2010-2014
VISEGRAD GROUP



STRATEGY COUNCIL
EMPOWERING CENTRAL EUROPE IN GLOBAL AFFAIRS

but no government has taken up the meticulous work needed by this stratum slowly but surely extricate itself from the ranks of the prospectless through responsive education and strategies for rising out of profound poverty. I'm marching with the Gypsies in Miskolc. They've assembled to protest against racism, although the crowd is chanting the old revolutionary slogan demanding work and bread. Of course no one hires them, because there is no work. They get bread only in the form of charity, just enough to go hungry but not starve to death. They are humiliated public toilers, their families have been foundering for generations without real jobs, and no one among the decision-makers stands before them to say: "Brethren, there is a solution."

A puddle of confused self-awareness

In any case, the members of the elite wash their hands of this. As cultured European citizens, they condemn all forms of racism, although they have no direct experience of it, given that the price per square meter of living space in the green belt is so high, the district is guaranteed to be Gypsy-free; nor do they have to worry about their children going to school with Gypsies. They don't know what the problem is, they declare that every person is born free and equal, that this is true of the Gypsies as well, so let them avail themselves of that right. They have no idea of what's going on in the villages that are becoming Gypsified, among the families foundering in the poverty-stricken settlements, and what the responsibility of those who live in brighter circumstances is. It was for the sake of a concept of a better society that the champions of the Enlightenment seized their pens and struggled for rights and justice. The Hungarian elite today knows nothing of the country it leads. The leading topics in the press are always those that concern the intellectual class, no one knows about, or wants to openly discuss, those suffocating at the depths of poverty. It's the ideological bickering that echoes the loudest: the appointment of a theater manager, a primitive corruption scandal, an anti-Christian joke by a reporter at a peripheral radio station. These arouse more indignation

than the lives of hundreds of thousands do. Never before has the leading intelligentsia ever had such scanty knowledge of the country whose leadership it is responsible for. But this lack of knowledge extends beyond the country, to the surrounding world as well. We have no idea of how the present balance of forces in the world operates, or of our place in it. We stick to the Euro-Atlantic axis, having exchanged our former big brother for the current one, without giving a thought to the direction in which Europe is headed, to the changes this continuous migration of peoples from the East will bring, to the set of values determining how the surrounding world is evolving. Of course we don't know anything about the neighboring countries, either. We can't blurt out two words in Slovak or Croatian, and we bristle when we're not addressed in Hungarian during our ski trips and summer vacations. A Czech or Polish cultural achievement generally comes to us by way of a detour through the West. Whatever doesn't receive the West's stamp of approval, we don't need. We pay no attention to our neighbors; we don't consider them companions in distress. We're part of the legendary West. We think our culture is at a higher lever than theirs. We regard ourselves as a great nation, and our accomplishments make us comparable to the others, while in fact we are an insufferably arrogant and self-important little country. When we're not blustering about daring to be great, we're ranting about daring to be small; instead, we ought to be exactly the size we are. No, we're unable to lift a 200-kilogram weight, because this country is not a Bulgarian weightlifter. On the other hand we can easily manage fifty kilograms; after all, we go body-building in our free time, and could move the 200 kilograms – or even a thousand – in increments of fifty. There can be no serious accomplishment without realistic self-image. I'm small, I'm David, and knowing this I'll undertake an audacious task. But Hungarian thinking on both the right and the left is stomping about in a puddle of confused self-awareness. It seeks external explanations for individual setbacks, and now the authority we could point at indignantly for forty years, which once played the part of our parental figure, is gone. We need an enemy to have caused our setbacks, an enemy we can point at, and who can that be if not a political adversary, or the world organizations that

tell Hungarians what is expected of them? A kind of unipolar identity has replaced our multifarious self-definition, which took into account familial, professional, sexual, and, for that matter, biological connections. The reason we're failing in our careers, in our family life, in our relationships, is that the enemy is making success impossible. This unipolar identity is one of the main characteristics of intellectuals opposing one another: they act only in their interests. But it also characterizes the multitudes that have fallen by the wayside. The vacuum left by this absence of true self-evaluation is often filled with a sentimental, old-fashioned, national consciousness, with origins in the 19th century, whose principles, once forward-pointing, are now timeworn. Behind the vision of the solitary nation fighting the good fight lurks the longing that Lehel, a Magyar chieftain, will again blow his mythic horn, and those roving bands will finally set out for the states of Europe, in order to lead the straying world back onto the straight and narrow. We are a people of freedom fighters, geniuses, and towering talents, a chosen people, whose mission to preserve life's true flame has come to us from on high. The right-wing leadership operates by means of faith systems, which serve as a catalyst for the other side to follow suit. There aren't humans, but demons, demigods, and heroes, on both sides, but I suspect the personages of Greek mythology wouldn't find much in common with them. European social thinking – which is built upon precision, doubt, reflexive investigation of the possible, as well as upon the conviction that we must accept responsibility for the consequences of our actions – is as far from us as when we were idling east of the Carpathians until we'd rounded up enough horses for the Conquest of Hungary. As if it weren't enough for the well-off European states to have to deal with those Greeks who vacation all year long from EU coffers, and those countless Muslims who are secretly working on the creation of a gigantic caliphate, now here come those Hungarians, with this cunning battle technique of pretending to retreat, then sneakily shooting their arrows behind them. But who would venture to remove these obsolete feelings from the hearts of our fellow countrymen, and accept the consequences of leaving only emptiness there?

New values in a new world

The portal wings of the West have been thrown wide open. We could mount our horses and launch another campaign of plunder, or just ride out for a few years to try our luck. Anything can be done, but the portal cannot be closed again, neither from within nor without. The light keeps pouring in: enlightenment in place of blackouts, and here as well as there the doubloons glisten, and the dazzle of the golden light fills every cranny. During the dictatorship, being poor or unsuccessful was practically a badge of honor. Whoever lived in poverty couldn't have been a stooge of the state. The heroes of resistance hailed from their ranks. It was they who refused to compromise in order to ascend to professorships, academic titles, or well-paid positions in public office, perhaps at the head of a firm. The dictatorship was unable to bully these erstwhile heroes into submission, but gold, that soft metal, has proved capable of breaking their spine. Practically the only measure of value in the new world is money. You have no money? You're incompetent. You have no money? You're a shiftless, untalented, blundering good-for-nothing, a born loser. The intelligentsia didn't want to be good-for-nothing. The Hungarian citizenry entered the regime change without wealth; the money it was able to get its hands on came mostly from the state; earning a livelihood depended on redistribution and does to this day. Of course, the respective powers-that-be abuse this; they don't want voters so much as believers. No wonder, then, that the cultural and professional elite has been sucked into party politics. An intellectual gives his preferred side not only his vote, but his whole personality as well. Under circumstances such as these, how can we expect a member of the elite to preserve his critical attitude toward the world? He can practice only one-sided criticism, and is incapable of taking a stand against manifest blunders if his team commits them. There are hardly any public figures left who have been able to maintain the credibility of their statements. We assume self-interest is behind every pronouncement; if we pay attention to word choice maybe we can discredit the speaker: what indebtedness is lurking in the background? By now we're suspi-

cious not only of the government and the political elite, our neighbor is suspicious to us, as is our fellow worker; once suspicion takes hold, it seems to pervade everything. Independent opinion and conjecture, if there is any, switches owners in doorways, the way those western phonograph records once did. The sanctity of ownership is pervading the view of the world, and if someone spits at capital, if someone talks about exploitation by capital, no one sees that person as an advocate of a better world, as the legendary figures of the classical left – Rosa Luxemburg, Plekhanov, Gramsci – were once regarded, he's seen as a pauper motivated by envy. You can be sure, if his pockets were full, he too would brush off those fallen by the wayside and, like his old friends, make for Lake Balaton to laze in the sun.

Beyond the borders

The golden portal is wide open. If you don't like it here, you can move abroad. Universities, scholarships, guest labor. The most flexible stratum of the country has fled beyond the borders. And within the borders, the talented are dwindling; we are a small country in which, despite our feverish self-image, not even by chance are there two geniuses to each head, not even one to two heads. I saw my native village after the village leaders drove away their children to seek their fortunes in the city. That village, like so many Hungarian settlements, didn't stink from its head, but from the absence of a head. We don't have to wait years for the negative consequences of this outward migration. The system of the family medical practice is on the brink of collapse because of the departure of doctors. Only occasionally does the overworked family doctor go out to the smaller settlements. Who cares? Those are second-class citizens anyway, the B-listers of our era, they should be glad they make as much as they do – thus does the prevailing power and the well-off elite wink at each other, after all, they can easily purchase the highest quality medical care, along with anything else; it's their birthright. In the words of the new Gospel: to he who has, more will be given. From he who has not, all will be taken.

The portals of the legendary West have opened wide, and for a moment we thought we had stepped into the light. We soon found out that although we'd like to have everything the denizens of the West have, we just can't grasp it. We thought we would have it coming to us for free or as a gift; after all, we deserve it. We all wanted to live like the Germans, but we can't operate like Germany. It wasn't modern and up-to-date thinking that stepped across the borders, but the manipulative manifestations of the western marketplace, the advertisements, the commercial channels' stridency, which, in this wrack and ruin, has had the effect that those logo-emblazoned shopping bags once had, which we carried around so proudly. We wanted freedom, a liberated and open world, but we fled into the shackles of ideology, into the confines of the Carpathian Basin, and even if we were able to come to terms with that, the economic constraints would continue to hold us captive. The boundary of Europe is not the periphery of the European Union. Even now, Europe's boundary is where it has been for centuries, and we, along with those who share our fate, are at the near edge of that boundary. There are no border guards, we may come and go, but there's no doubt that all our money will be used up the first time we shop. That is, if we even get as far as the border. To the majority this freedom means nothing; they're concerned with the current day's lunch and dinner, with the heating and electricity bills. And if they happen to look up because their necks are cramped from constantly watching the tips of their shoes, it's not the portal of the legendary West they see, but the palaces of the masters of their country, the iron gates and fences equipped with high-powered security systems. Those gates can't be seen through, not from inside or out, because there is no keyhole; the gate is operated electronically, no light seeps through, and it never opens even a crack. If by chance a chink does open, security guards stand ready to restore the peaceful image projected by the industrial cameras, and to throw the intruder out.

Translated by Eugene Brogyányi

The author is an acknowledged Hungarian poet.



▲ The picture of Nikoloz was taken on Saturday, March 15th, 2014 in the night before the Crimea-Referendum took place.



■ A year ago, Evgeniya Rudenko emigrated with her seven-year-old son Nikoloz to Lyon, France, where she works as a journalist. However, the events surrounding Maidan in Kyiv and the Crimea prompted her to take a trip with her son to their native country: Nikoloz should see with his own eyes how his homeland was changing under the pressure of engaged citizens. On Maidan, the two laid flowers for the murdered protesters. After a full day of intense impressions, the small Ukrainian boy proudly wears the orange hardhat given to him by activists.

On Maidan, Kyiv's Independence Square, Nikoloz saw the barricades set up by protesters to protect them from the police. On the square, there are still the paving stones used by the people against the police special units. The piled up car tires are still there, which were set on fire by anti-government protesters in order to create smoke when the police tried to storm the square. The protests against the government of President Yanukovich began in November 2013, much blood was shed in February 2014.

Today on Maidan, there is a sea of flowers in memory of the fallen. People from all over Ukraine come together. The Ukrainian population bows to those who were killed on Maidan for the freedom of their country. They are called the "Heavenly Hundred." The first to be killed was Serhiy Nigoyan, an Eastern-Ukrainian of Armenian origin. He was shot on Maidan on the morning of 22 January 2014.

The events on Maidan have been well documented; however, the question remains, how will the revolution be remembered in the minds of boys such as Nikoloz? How will these memories and the tales of the "Heavenly Hundred" influence young people growing up in Ukraine and their perception of the relationship with their neighbor, Russia? Nikoloz's helmet symbolizes a new society, which is currently being built by the people, some of whom have been risking their lives for the cause. Will Nikoloz one day be able to return to a better Ukraine?

📷 Gerald Neugschwandtner studied political science and photography, and teaches Political Campaigning at the University of Vienna, Austria. He was campaign spokesman for Arnold Schwarzenegger during the 2003 recall election in California. He is represented by ASAblanca.com photo agency.

READ ON YOUR TABLET



FOLLOW ON TWITTER

@VISEGRADINSIGHT

