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Postcommunist Citizens in Integrated Europe

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European citizenship, European identity, enlargement, Central and Eastern Europe, free movement of persons

The main aim of this paper is to demonstrate the limits of European citizenship and European collective identity in the context of the latest enlargements of the EU, i.e. the accession of postcommunist countries of Central and Eastern Europe in 2004 and 2007. The introduction of transitional periods for the free movement of persons with regard to the 'new European citizens', as well as the deportation of Roma from France in 2010, demonstrate that something is amiss with the concept of EU citizenship and the 'European identity' which would permit such practices. It is a fear of the Other as an essential element of European identity. The paper concludes by drawing on the work of Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida, examining the prospects that they open up for thinking differently about European identity.

1 "Good Citizenship" acquired through state education

The concept of citizenship and the means of its implementation and realization provide interesting and important insights into the very nature of any political community. How an individual is treated by the community she/he belongs to, and what his/her rights and obligations are, reveal a lot about the character of the society in question. Therefore, citizenship is a useful hallmark and instrument of assessment of a particular political community, because the quality of a community depends on how it treats its weakest part – an individual. Furthermore, at least according to the Western political tradition, with its roots in Aristotelian thought, individuals constitute the essence of a community. The author of *Politics* argued that the "prosperity and happiness of a state is equal to the happiness of each individual..." (Aristotle 1980, 230, 243). This explains why the meaning of the proper name Athens was in fact used to denote Athenians as a group name for the individuals comprising the foundations of a community (Manville 1990, 7). Individuals, conceived in a political context, formed a specific type of a community/polity.

Another crucial feature of democratic citizenship, rooted in the Greek tradition, is the rule of isonomy – equality of rights for all citizens. Not all the inhabitants of the Greek polis were equal, as women, children, foreigners etc. were excluded from citizenship. However, if you were a citizen you were entitled to equal rights. In this light, a fundamental attribute of the Greek polis was the freedom of all citizens. According to Hannah Arendt, the Greek freedom included: status of a free man, personal inviolability, freedom of economic activity, right of unrestricted movement (Arendt 1988, 12).

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Thus, citizenship is an expression of the collective identity of the polity it encapsulates in political terms. In other words, the conditions necessary for the acquirement of citizenship, and the rights and duties associated with it, are derivative of the identity of the community the citizens belong to. In this context, our European Union citizenship is in a sense an expression of the European collective identity which has developed throughout history. At the abstract level the interrelationship between citizenship and collective identity is an even more complex issue. Some scholars convincingly argue that in fact we face a three-tiered link between collective identity and citizenship (Karolewski 2010, 21). Firstly, collective identity enables the construction of citizenship and the non-face-to-face interactions governed by citizenship. Secondly, collective identity is a function of the adopted model of citizenship, and thirdly, the notion of citizenship as belonging to a political community implicates a normative claim of collective identity (*ibidem*, 22).

In order to simplify and elucidate the complex phenomenon we might argue that in our context Union citizenship results from European identity and is to create and shape a European Union identity. As Dora Kostakopoulou points it out

"European citizenship constituted a unique experiment for stretching social and political bonds beyond national boundaries and for creating a political community in which diverse peoples become associates in a collective experience and institutional designers" (Kostakopoulou 2007, 623).

Seen in this light, Union citizenship is to provide conditions for greater political participation in various normative systems beyond the nation state, conditions that are to limit marginalization and discrimination (Lister & Pia 2008, 163). In this paper however we focus on the link between European Union citizenship and European identity.

The departure point of our considerations comes from a conviction that the victory of Solidarity and collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989 had a crucial significance for all of Europe, and especially for the countries of Central and Eastern

Europe (CEECs). In the new situation they could launch the realisation of their everlasting dream involving liberalisation and a "return to Europe". In other words, the other words the inhabitants of the former communist countries hoped to become equal citizens of the integrated Europe.

There is a significant coincidence in the fact that the CEECs began their accession process to the EU at the very moment when the idea of European Union citizenship was introduced into European law by the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. It also should be emphasised that one of most important chapters of the accession negotiations with the EU included the free movement of persons, which - by the way - was mentioned as the very first right envisaged within EU citizenship. Indeed, the right to move freely is a fundamental freedom of the internal market and an essential political element of the rights linked to the status of EU citizenship. Sergio Carrera is right in arguing that

"if free movement was first conceived as a purely economic phenomenon, the TEU provided a brand new political and social meaning to the whole debate. It also extended in Art. 12 the rights of exit, entry and residence to all nationals of the member states without any discrimination on grounds of nationality" (Carrera 2004, 2).

Furthermore, the right to free movement and residence within the territory of the Union is a precondition for the exercise of the other basic rights conferred by European Community (EC) law, including the right to participate in local and European elections in one's place of residence, consular and diplomatic assistance while being in third countries, etc. The exercise of these rights is only possible when the person involved moves across borders.

2 New citizens of the European Union

According to the Accession Treaty, signed between the European Union and the ten new member states that joined the Community in 2004, a transitional period with a maximum of seven years (using a 2+3+2 system) was imposed, during which Community law relating to the free movement of persons would not apply fully to all citizens across the enlarged the EU. During the transitional period, workers of the "new" member states (except Cyprus and Malta) could face restrictions regarding their access to the labour markets of the "old" EU (EU-15). At the inception of the new EU-25, only the United Kingdom, Ireland and Sweden fully opened their labour markets to the new member states¹.

The main arguments used for introduction of transitional periods concerned the fear of an invasion of workers from the CEECs following their accession to the EU, which was assumed would have a negative impact on employment and the whole economy of the EU-15 member states. Actually, the arguments put forth were not convincing during the time of accession negotiations, and they were based on mistaken assumptions and economic predictions.

This was proven two years later by the European Commission Report (Report on the Functioning of the Transitional Arrangements set out in 2003, 2006), which showed that, contrary to expectations, workers' mobility from the new member states to the EU-15 had mostly positive effects and was, in most countries, less significant than foreseen. Moreover, workers from the CEECs contributed to relieving labour shortages and to better economic performance of the EU as a whole. The UK, Ireland and Sweden, which did not introduce restrictions, identified high economic growth, a decrease in unemployment, and a rise of employment as a result of the opening of their labour markets. For the EU as a whole, the flows of workers were rather limited.

Thus, the introduction of transitional periods was neither legitimate nor rationally founded². Moreover, the restrictions imposed on the new members were in contradiction to the very foundations of the internal market, which is based on the free movement of goods, capital, services and people. Additionally, they were contrary to the goals of the European Union adopted by the European Council during IGC 1996, which declared its intention to build a more democratic and "ever closer Union of citizens". It would be difficult to justify these restrictions with the stated programme of bringing the Union closer to its citizens. And finally, the exclusion of the new members from the labour markets of the majority of the EU-15 states was against the fundamental European values. According to Vaclav Havel: "there are some values which can be subjected neither to the interest of a state nor to the economy. Among them are: equality and dignity of all citizens" (Havel 1996, 2). In other words, human and citizen rights come first, not be subordinated to interests of economy and community.

When Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU in January 2007, a similar period of work restrictions up to seven years was also included in their Accession Treaty. While the majority of EU countries have since lifted the restrictions, the UK in this case is among the eight countries that still require Bulgarian and Romanian citizens to have a work permit, the others being Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta and the Netherlands.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the right of free movement of persons (Art. 21 TFEU) is also subject to limitations and conditions which, while not mentioned in the Treaty, are contained in the secondary legislation which was adopted to give effect to the Treaty. The introduction of European citizenship was associated with the adoption of specific secondary legislation which referred to it. Therefore the existing community legislation governs the realisation of the right of free movement. In particular, reference should be made to three directives, adopted by the Council in 1990 and 1993. These directives, providing rights of residence for retired persons (Directive 90/364); students (Directive 93/96); and persons who have

ceased economic activity (Directive 90/365) state that these groups of EU citizens, in order to enjoy freedom of movement, have to possess sufficient subsistence resources and proper health insurance. These regulations are meant to ensure that these groups of people and their families will not become a financial burden on the social system of the host member state. The 'sufficient resources' may be higher than the level at which the host member state grants social assistance to its own nationals, or higher than the level of minimum pension. As a result, those member states which offer more generous social assistance in comparison to others "will be able to exclude nationals who, although above the subsistence minimum in their country of origin, still possess fewer resources than the social assistance minimum in the state in which they wish to apply for residence". These three documents have been dubbed the 'playboys' directives'. Thus contrary to the reasoning of the Court of Justice given below, each member state ultimately determines the scope of EU citizens eligibility to the free movement provisions. These practices are the result of a policy aimed at protecting public funds and preventing citizens of another member state from being a burden on a member state's national welfare system.

The conditions envisaged in the Directive 93/96 are not legitimate in the light of the case-law referring to the free movement of students. According to the Court of Justice, equal treatment concerning access to vocational training applies not only to the conditions imposed by educational institutions, but to any regulation affecting exercise of the right of free movement. The Court held that denial of a student's a right to reside in a particular member state would have the effect of denying them a right to vocational training on equal basis, which is in violation of EC law. As the Raulin case shows, a citizen of a member state accepted for enrolment in a vocational training programme in another member state automatically enjoys the right to reside in that member state for the period of the programme.

While the conditions delineated with respect to 'sufficient resources and medical insurance' protect the interests of the member states, in practice they violate the principle of equal treatment of European citizens. The content of the directives is thus contrary to the Commission's claims that the introduction of European citizenship was aimed at improving the right of residence. In practice, without sufficient subsistence resources and proper medical insurance there is no right of residence, and without a right of residence there is no access to vocational training. An EU citizen without sufficient resources one still be an EU citizen, but he/she will not be able to go to another member state and enjoy the other rights resulting from Union citizenship .

3 Modern exclusion in Europe

The situations described above, concerning the accession conditions of the citizens of the new member states, not to mention economically inactive EU citizens and Third Country Nationals (TCN), lead

us to the conclusion that there is something amiss in the theory and practice of a European Union citizenship which allows for such discrimination.

The key argument of this paper is the statement that the exclusion of some groups of Union citizens from enjoyment of the very basic right envisaged within Union citizenship is an expression of a crisis of European identity. If we examine the situations very carefully, we can observe that Europe has a serious problem with encounters with the 'Other', which constitutes one of the main challenges Europe faces at the turn of the 21st century. In other words, the old continent is not so open to Otherness, and this 'Western enclosure' is a very fundamental feature of European modern political identity. Western rationality, as well as Western social practice, have been developing in the direction of exclusion, fear, limitation, egoism, and drawing a borderline between itself and the 'Other'.

This attitude towards otherness is manifested in acts of mass internment - that is, in the application of a series of measures which impose the duty of work on all those who are unable to earn their living. According to Foucault, internment - i.e. enclosure of otherness - derives from the imperative of work (Foucault 1993, 68). The aim is to solve the problems of 'beggary and laziness as the sources of confusion'. Hence it can be seen that the establishment of shelters, asylum houses, hospitals or reformatories as a means of elimination - exclusion of the 'inconvenient' and the 'non-conforming' - has been clearly based on an economic rationale. This practice has provided the tools for controlling wages in the event of demands for wage increases, and it additionally has enabled the 'liquidation' of unemployment and/or concealment of its negative consequences. According to Foucault:

"The economic and moral postulate of internment was formulated as a result of certain working experience. In the classical world, the demarcation line between work and idleness was running along the great exclusion of lepers. Instead of leper colonies shelters were built (...) Reference was made to the old rite of excommunication but in the field of production and trade." (ibidem, 76).

By means of segregation the modern world has tried to eliminate all those deemed to be "asocial", in one way or another, in relation to the entire social order. The author of 'Discipline and punish' notes that there is a similarity between the eighteenth-century internees and the today's mass internment of non-conforming individuals - both the former and the latter were created in the original act of segregation. Since the mid-seventeenth century any person banished from society becomes a prime candidate for a future dweller and inmate in all kinds of prisons, hospitals, shelters and asylums. He or she is the object of the same gesture of dismissal which was once used to get rid of lepers. Moreover, that gesture has created the 'asocial' and the 'non-conforming' categories - it 'produced the Stranger where he could hardly be sensed; tore the thread apart, broke the familiarity link (...) In one word, that gesture was the cause of alienation' (ibidem, 85).

The big closure - as defined by Foucault - has played not only a negative and excluding role, but first and foremost it has had a profound impact on mobilisation and organisation. Thanks to the exclusion of others, dismissed as the 'unreasonable', the world becomes more rational, orderly and uniform. However, it is overlooked that the presence of the 'asocial, the unuseful, actually allows for organising the entire society in a more functional way. Just as for Descartes the presence of the unreasonable sphere of madness, dreams, delusions allowed for reinforcing the clarity of Truth itself, similarly the existence of the Other, strangers in the social sphere, constitutes an excellent reservoir of sense. The implications of this truth were already perceived in nineteenth century capitalism, for which the armies of the unemployed - thrown outside the margins of the society - were one of the sources of coherence and efficiency of the production process. The presence of the unemployed was a perfect motivating factor that mobilised all those who did not want to find themselves in a similar situation with respect to work.

Foucault's philosophy attempts to unveil the history of reason, which in modern times assumes the shape of scientific knowledge, technology, production, and political organisation (Foucault 1988, 25). The rationality, its logos, involves the unceasing act of self-confirmation through exclusion, self-limitation, and drawing a borderline between oneself and the other.

According to Zygmunt Bauman, at a certain point in history the Other meant Jews, whose exclusion was a part of the Christian identity. 'The concept of a Jew,' says the author of *Modernity and the Holocaust*, 'provided an important lesson that the alternative to the existing order was not another order but only chaos and destruction.' (Bauman 1992, 69). At the end of the seventeenth century the segregation of Jews was a manifestation of fear of contamination of Europe; repressions against them and against other minorities became a major factor of European modern times. In Delanty's opinion, it is likely that the Reformation-driven split within Christianity's bosom was planned in order to find scapegoats - with Jews and women constituting a perfect fit. The author of *Inventing Europe* claims that this could 'explain the great exodus of Jews from Central Europe and the increasing witch-hunts which accompanied the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. Following the ultimate retreat of the Muslims from the Iberian Peninsula, Europe was liberated from its external enemy, therefore the role of the victim - the European "Other" - was assigned to an internal enemy: Jews' (Delanty 1999, 61).

The East, brought to life by Western reason, was perceived as both the borderline and baseline of the West, and hence it also became the 'Other'. According to Foucault 'the East constitutes one of the divisions within the universality of the Western *ratio*: The East, thought to be the origin, the bewildering source of nostalgias and promises of return. The East, given away to the colonizing reason of the West and at the same time somehow forbidding - as it will

always be the borderline, the night of beginnings that gave rise to the West - the West which drew a demarcation line within it. The East will be everything which the West is not, although it still has to search for its primary truth there.' (Foucault 1993, 137).

Also, Delanty argues that the 'historical awareness' of Western Europe was shaped under the influence of three sources of threats: Muslims, Jews and Slavs. Similarly as in the case of Muslims and Jews, Slavs were considered by Western Europeans to be Asians or semi-Asians. They formed an important bargaining chip in trade with the Islamic world. Europe was selling Slavs as slaves, hence the origin of the name Slavs, as noted by Lewis (Lewis 1993, 23).

At the outset of modern times, the grain trade led to a split between the West and the East. In consequence Europe witnessed two independent stages of feudalism: in Western Europe between the ninth and fourteenth centuries, and in the East between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. With the development of the Western Europe its eastern part was becoming slavishly subjected to the West. Consequently, the concept of 'Europe' was associated with the institution of West European nation-states, and adopted somewhat a normative character. It was not perceived as an alternative to a nation-state, but to the contrary, the concept of 'Europe' became subjected to national interests. Contrary to the United States, in Europe the idea of statehood and the national idea were placed ahead of, and instrumental in defining, international norms and institutions. During the Enlightenment era the term 'Europe', being the alternative to the nation-state, was present only among intellectual elites, having no meaning to ordinary people, since the conflicts between the nation-states were too severe. According to de Rougement, the idea of Europe was essentially devised by France for purposes of expansion, by pleading the 'superiority of the European religion, the white race and the French language'. At the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, one of the early concepts of European political governance was 'the great project of Henry IV, prepared by Prince Sully, for whom Europe was supposed to be in fact the extension of France. Establishing an alliance of the Western states against Turks was to be an essential element of that plan.' (de Rougement 1996, 157)

Thus the identity of Europe was being constituted in opposition to and out of fear of what was different, other. Here, the Orient also played a crucial role. The Orient, being the 'substitute of the otherness of others', was at the same time a distorting mirror of the West. Europe needed the other in opposition, against whom it could build its own identity. Therefore the European nature was being established around the antagonism between the West on the one side, and Orient and the East on the other. The previous opposition of Christianity against Islam was substituted by the opposition of civilisation against barbarism. The nineteenth century carried a conviction that Europe represented the civilisation ideal, and that its mission was to civilize

the world. The non-European world was perceived as a reflection of what Europe used to be, and 'Europe' was deemed to have become the embodiment of Western values, treated as universal principles.

The category of race, rather than language or religion, became the uniting factor for nineteenth-century Europe. It was a period which witnessed the development of anthropology - the study of 'primitive people', which was supposed to provide the scientific explanation for Europe's spiritual and intellectual superiority over extra-European communities. (Delanty 129) After the fall of the Ottoman Empire during the First World War, the role of Islam was taken over by Communism. The October Revolution transformed the final stage of World War One into a battle between capitalist and communist countries.

The Cold War was in a sense a continuation of that process, during which Europe's identity was formed in opposition to the Soviet bloc. In this light the Berlin wall, erected in 1961, became a symbol of the Europe's internal division and an incarnation of the age-old conflict between the West and the East. Delanty notes that 'this profound division was visible even in the attitude of Western Jews towards Jews from the East, whom they often disregarded and discriminated against. (...) The mutual hostility between the East and the West would always focus on certain groups that were compelled to carry the historical burden. It should be strongly emphasised that the cultural representations of the reality crystallised in the form of regressive identities based on the category of race, xenophobic concepts of nationalism and on obscure irrationalism' (*ibidem*).

It should be pointed out that the term "cold war", rooted in the medieval conflict between Christianity and Islam - was rediscovered by Walter Lipmann just after the Second World War. It was to provide the ideological foundation for Europe's defence against the potential danger emanating from the Soviet Union, as well as against any potential rebirth of the Third Reich. During the cold war, the Western mentality and the framework of political discussion was shaped by the conflict between liberal democracy and Communism. The European identity built during this time was personified by the establishment of West Germany as the Federal Republic of Germany, rooted in the West, and of East Germany i.e. the German Democratic Republic - set up in the Soviet occupation zone.

In this sense, the Europe's integration was a continuation of the history of Western rationality, and therefore the very embodiment of the logic of exclusion - bringing to life yet another Other - the mad, the sick, the offender, the woman, the Jew, the Slav or finally - the non-European, who, where necessary, could be used as the evidence of Western rationality, fitness, righteousness, purity, superiority, etc. The continent's integration was somewhat a materialisation of Europe's heritage to date, a Europe which, according to Waldenfels, considered itself 'the incarnation and warden of the real faith, the right reason, true advancement, civilised humanity, universal discussion... The name 'Europe' allows to

speak "in the name of..." , and the speaker becomes a self-declared spokesman. One does not judge some civilisation anymore, one makes judgements "in the name of civilisation." (*ibidem*)

Europe's post-war unification process was materialised at the outset as an integration against "non-Europeans", including all those who found themselves on the other side of the Iron Curtain. Yalta was both a complementary element and concurrently the beginning of a history that - driven by its own logic - split Europe in two and established its own Other, against whom the West could successfully unite. The Cold War era, and especially the fifties and the sixties, are in principle the best years of the unification process, the period of its greatest success. The fear of the Soviet threat - the Other - functioned perfectly as one of the driving forces of the integration machine. We have to keep in mind that the post-war integration process resulted not only from the need to solve the German problem and to ensure the economic development and political stability of 'Europe'; it was also caused by the threat of communism and the Soviet Union. This is why the integration itself was actively supported by the pope and the Catholic Church, treating the unification of Europe as the best remedy against the ideology of evil (i.e. communism). It was no accident that the founding fathers of European integration, including Monnet, Schumann, and de Gasperi, came from the Christian democratic party.

Thus, ironically, the collapse of Communism and the end of the Cold War in 1989 turned out to be a big 'shock' to the West, and a source of chaos and destabilisation. Its world almost fell apart, depriving Europe of the foundations that had been so vital for its development. While the victory of 'Solidarity', followed by the fall of the Berlin Wall, initially aroused hopes for permanent abolition of the barriers that divided the Old Continent, after a short period of euphoria the Western states started fencing off their Eastern neighbours with a new, less visible wall - that of fear. The liberation of the Central and Eastern European countries offered huge opportunities, but also presented a danger to the Western part of the continent. Jerzy Łukaszewski notes that 'one of the major integration catalysts, i.e. the threat from the East, disappeared.' (Łukaszewski 1998, 91)

After the 2005 referenda and in the context of the present financial and institutional crisis, there remains a fear of immigrants in Europe. The former French minister for Foreign Affairs, Dominique de Villepin, expressed an opinion that vividly reflected the nature of the problem. He said that "there is a fear of the other in the heart of Europe, of the other culture, of the neighbouring state" (de Villepin, 2002). In this sense Europe has always been sick because of the Other, and that illness is still present on the old continent.

4 Future of European citizenship

In order to meet the challenge of its encounter with the Other, Europe must overcome its limitations

and develop a new identity able to deal and communicate with that same Other. According to Theodora Kostakopoulou, putting an excessive emphasis on the Greek, Roman or Christian heritage may become the sprouting seed of European racism and xenophobia. Europe must overcome its previous limitations and start building its identity towards the Other, rather than against the Other. (Kostakopoulou 2001, 26)

The intellectual premises for a new approach to the problem of the 'Other' have been expressed most comprehensively in the thought of Emmanuel Levinas and the so-called 'philosophy of dialogue', having also such prominent representatives as Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, and Gabriel Marcel. According to Levinas, meeting the Other is a 'fundamental event' in a human being's contact with the world. The Other is the only one and unique being in the philosophy of dialogue, and is considered to be of the highest value, as being a concept which can protect the individual against the danger posed to human identity by the masses and the great totalitarian systems of the twentieth century. It has been proven that indifference towards the Other can, under specific circumstances, lead to Auschwitz.

In his philosophy, Levinas leads us to the pre-community sources of morality, seeing the meeting with the Other as the original experience. Such a meeting is the greatest experience and basis for all later relations between people, and also a way of approaching God. Keeping good relations with Others, as the basic attribute of human existence, above all means taking responsibility. According to Levinas, if the Other is looking at me, I am responsible for him. My responsibility for the Other is unconditional; it is not dependent on any previous knowledge about the Other but is rather ahead of that knowledge. The author of 'Totality and Infinity' says: 'I analyse human inner-relations which - in the nearness of the Other - apart from the impression which I myself make on another human - his face, expression of the Other, is decisive for me to serve him (...) The face is commanding and deciding. Its meaning involves command. Precisely speaking, if the face means command in my imagination, it is not the way an ordinary sign manifests its meaning; this command makes up the entire meaning of the face.' (cited after Bauman, op. cit., 252) In other words, in Levinas's opinion the responsibility for the Other is the original element of subjectivity. It is not stimulated by any primary force, ethical or legal code, or fear of penalty. Only when I become responsible, do I become a subject. It is sufficient to break through the curtain of everyday life to be able to arrive at the source of our existence.

In this sense this is a postulating philosophy, and also ethical to the core - a philosophy that requires a certain heroism and going beyond our ordinary experience and habits in our relations with the Other people. Today more than ever Europe needs this heroism and needs to go beyond its traditional approach to Otherness.

This 'new thinking' about the European problem found its specific continuation in the thought of Jacques Derrida. In his 'The Other Heading' Derrida

discloses a somewhat different, more political face of deconstructionism, of which he was the most well-known representative. The ambiguous title of his book, which could be understood as 'the other headland, direction, course', is an indication of the specific intellectual journey of its author. It is a manifestation of the search for a new definition of European identity, or rather a different way of looking and thinking about the identity itself. According to Derrida, the traditional understanding of Europe's identity is a closure in 'our own', leaving the 'foreign' and 'other' behind. However, 'it is a culture's attribute not to be identical with itself. To think about Europe in a different way means to think about the European identity in terms of "otherness", "difference", "pluralism", "apory".' Therefore, the other course (the Other Heading) is not so much a suggestion of a new 'goal' or 'vision', but rather a transformation of thinking. Europe must begin to think of itself in terms of the 'other'. As Derrida writes, 'We need to become guards of a certain idea of Europe, a certain otherness of Europe - yet Europe that is not closing the door of its own identity and which is exemplifying the striving for what it is not, towards the opposite side or towards the other. We need to devise and imagine the new style of thinking in which the identity comes from the otherness and not vice versa.' (Derrida 1992, 29). It will be difficult to do without paradox here, with responsibility being its ethical and political dimension. If responsibility is to be free from Eurocentrism - in other words, from equating Europe's integration with West European integration - Europe must be reflected upon in a new way. This new way means that Europe will not only be responsible for the 'other' but its own identity will be constituted by the 'other'. Moreover, that responsibility should be realised - according to the French philosopher - through respect for diversity, otherness, but at the same time for common values. Thus rejecting the easy and alluring solution of either a full unification or a total dispersion, Derrida speaks of the necessary action to be taken within the framework of the enlightenment values of liberal democracy, emphasising at the same time that those values are not sufficient in and of themselves to ensure respect for the 'other'. What we need is a definition of the European identity, or a way of thinking about it, which would combine the universalism of its values with its 'diversity'. For Europe 'must not get dispersed into a thousand provinces, separate views, idiosyncrasies or small nationalisms, but on the other hand it must not submit to the tyranny of centralised power.' (*ibidem*)

At this critical juncture in the integration process, when a more adequate 'vision of unification' seems necessary, the reflections represented by Jacques Derrida may provide the answer to the urgent challenge of our contemporary times. For one thing is certain, Europe - facing qualitatively new problems in its encounters with the Other - is in need of a thorough revision (deconstruction) of the fundamental categories on which its identity is built. It should be emphasised however that Derrida does not offer ready solutions, plans, or overall projects.

He only indicates the direction (the Other Heading) where answers and solutions should be sought to the ever new problems and challenges. The signs on that road include the new identity determined by the 'other' and by responsibility for the 'other'. Whether the proposals of these philosophers are realistic is a completely different question...

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Endnotes

¹ In 2006, after the first phase of the transitional period, Spain, Italy, Denmark, Portugal decided to open their labour markets.

² It is often argued that transitional periods for accession to labour markets of the EU were also introduced when Spain and Portugal joined the EU in 1986. However, it should be noted that at that time these restrictions were not a violation of Union citizens' rights, because the concept of European citizenship was introduced to the European legislation within the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. Thus it was a different legal context.