

# Foreword

## East Side Stories

### Martin Schulz

Europe can look back at an unprecedented success story. After centuries suffering under devastating conflicts and the catastrophe of two World Wars, the European integration process has created peace, stability and prosperity. The absence of war, together with Europe's open borders, has made one of humankind's oldest dreams come true. Starting with the six founding members, the Union has grown to 27 over time. The common market is a daily reality for half a billion people and the cornerstone of our shared prosperity, economic growth and employment. Eastern enlargement put an end to the artificial separation of the continent by the 'Iron Curtain', and has contributed substantially to the peaceful transformation of these countries, and thereby contributing to the security, stability and prosperity of Europe as a whole. Many observers expected the European Union to change the new member states in Central and Eastern Europe - and these countries have undergone impressive social, political and economic transformations at an amazing speed. Few foresaw how deeply the new members would change the EU for the better. They have brought their unique political and historical experiences to the table, enriching the European perspective for all of us. This book is a tribute to the tremendous contribution "East Side Stories" make to European political debates. Dealing with up-to date issues ranging from social policy, energy, the environment and migration to the external dimension of the EU and its relationship with Russia and the USA, the authors offer thoughtful insights into the challenges that lie ahead for the European Union.

The European Union is a global player by definition and has a key role to play in coping with the challenges of globalisation. Looking inward, the EU must strengthen its social dimension and conclude its reform process. Facing outward, the EU must act in unison and speak with one





voice. The EU must deliver when it comes to the problems we face-tightening control of the financial markets and re-launching the economy, the fight against climate change and the reform of international organisations, dealing with international terrorism and eradicating hunger and poverty in the world. A progressive Europe is needed both to address the challenges that lie ahead in the 21st century and to manage globalisation for the benefit of everyone.

## Introduction

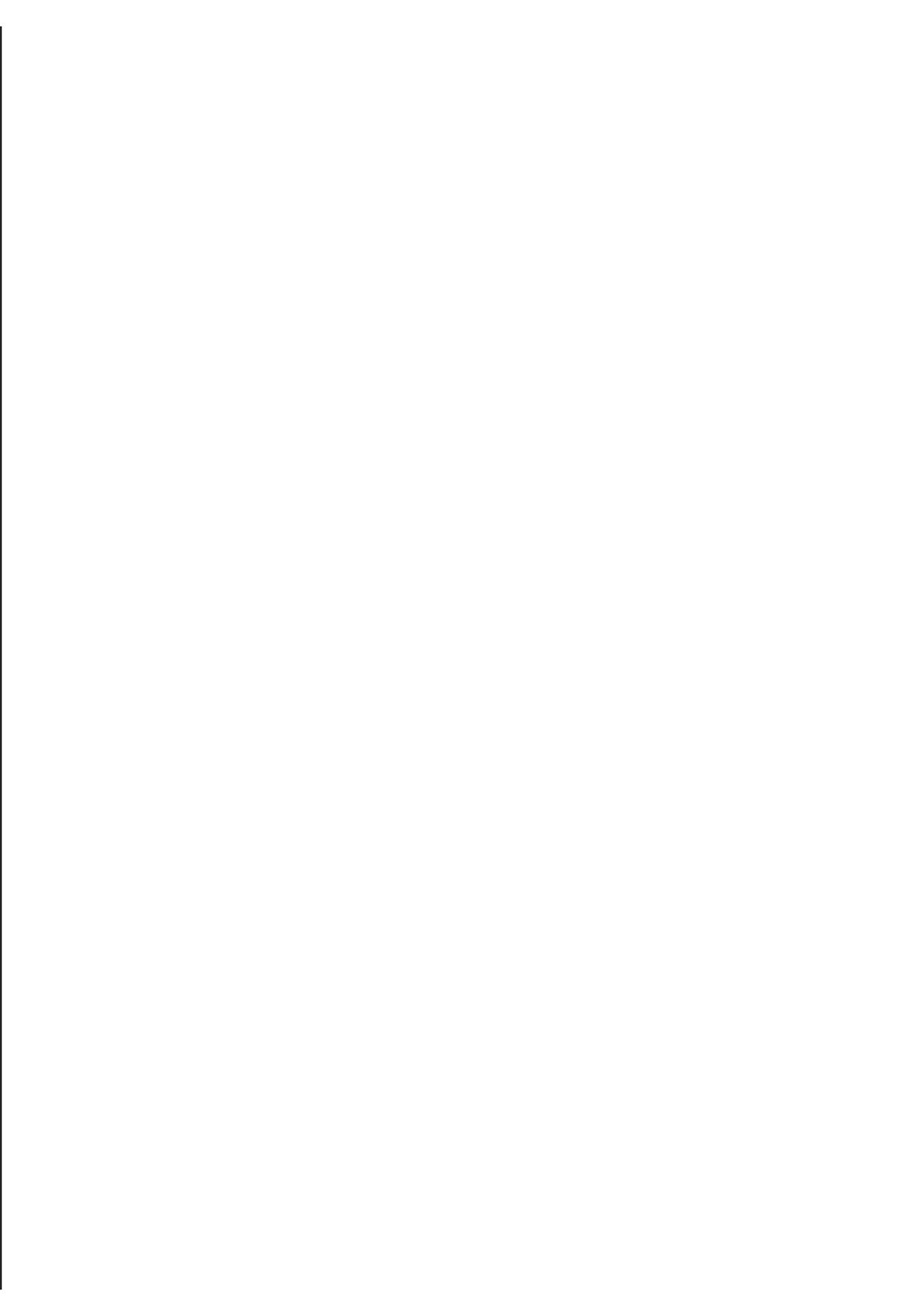
It is with great pleasure that I recommend colleagues and others to read this publication by seven of my colleagues from the new Member States plus Finland. In bite-size articles covering a range of issues, they can open our eyes to the perceptions of colleagues from these countries on issues that may be seen very differently from another perspective.

Of course, views are not homogenous or uniform. Eastern Europe has as much diversity of views as Western Europe. Nonetheless, the particular historical contexts, the special reference points and the unique experiences of Eastern Europe reflected in this highly readable collection of essays, is something that any Western reader would do well to read, absorb and to reflect upon.

One of the pleasures of the European Parliament is that, with colleagues from 27 different countries, you learn something new every day. Reading through this publication, you can, in less than one day, learn a thousand new things. I commend it to any curious reader.

*Richard Corbett*





# 1. Addressing the Social Gap

## Is What's Good for a Company Good for Lithuania?

**Justas Paleckis**

Of the 19 years of the restored independence of the Republic of Lithuania, the left has been in power for a large majority of this time, a total of 12 years. Though it is true that those who confess to social democratic values had an absolute majority in the parliament for only four years, after this the handling of social issues depended on coalition partners.

The social gap in Lithuania did not lessen, despite the economic leap of 2000-2008, when there was annual GDP growth of 7%-8%. Lithuania along with Portugal is leading the pack in the EU according to this infamous indicator. Yet another statistical observation: the social gap in the whole of the EU gradually declined for a long period, but from 2004 it started to grow. One doesn't want to suggest that this is linked with the great enlargement of the EU, but...

Lithuania, this time together with Romania, leads in terms of another important indicator for social issues, also from the bottom. Only 29% of the GDP is re-distributed through taxes, while the EU average is about 40% of GDP, and in the northern countries it totals 50% of GDP. So has a tax haven been created for businessmen in Lithuania? In part yes, however the going has been rough to attract more foreign investment. But, little funding is left for the state to put into the public sector, such as education, healthcare, culture, infrastructure, courts and police and governmental institutions.

The mood of Lithuania's inhabitants was especially gloomy at the turn of the last century, during the particularly unsuccessful 4 year rule of the Conservatives, when Russia, with whom Lithuanian businessmen had close trade links, experienced an economic crisis. At the time, according to surveys, 80%-90% of the inhabitants



*High skilled professionals and people prepared to work everywhere are leaving from Lithuania*



stated that the Soviet economic system and even political system were better than the current one. Of course, at the time there were relatively few (1 out of 3) who wanted to return to the past. As Lithuania was readying itself to join the EU and after it did, assessments of the past changed the nostalgia for the past began to disappear.

Lithuania, after Estonia and Latvia, was the 3rd country in Europe to renounce progressive taxation. Not long ago all citizens paid an income tax of 33% and now it is 21%. The Social Democratic Party made a suggestion for those that earn more to pay more in taxes. If this would have happened, it could have been an important social-democratic step going against the general current: already now in 7 EU countries (all of them joined in 2004 or later) there is a flat-tax system in place. The Social Democrats are offering to introduce taxation system for excessive property, however, once again they came up against the opposition of other parties.

Economic growth during the last few years allowed for the increase in pensions and minimum wage to 200-300 Euros. However the profit of businessmen during this period grew immeasurably higher. In Lithuania, a strong middle class has yet to appear. Small and medium businessmen are not able to find a place for themselves under the sun, as they are swallowed by large local and foreign companies.

A phrase was coined 100 years ago in America during the expansion of wild capitalism: "What's good for Ford is good for America." In Lithuania, powerful companies are appearing, who try to adapt this phrase to themselves and attempt to have influence in the parliament and the government. Without a doubt, similar processes can be observed in many other European Union countries.

In Lithuania it is easier for employers to defend their interests, as trade unions are few. In Lithuania only 12% of those in the workforce have come together into a union, with only Estonia having a lower rate among EU countries. A collective agreement between employers and those working, include only 15% of companies. And practice shows, that where trade unions are weak, the social gap is bigger and the standards of living are lower.

Having observed that qualified workers are leaving in

droves to other EU countries, businessmen raised wages for good specialists. In construction, for instance, they are already earning almost as much as those in Western countries. However, starting from the middle of 2007 the situation was made more difficult by the growing inflation, which a year later reached double digits. And the financial crisis that occurred during the second half of 2008 and continues to take its toll did not pass Lithuania by, though not as painfully as for the other Baltic countries.

The help of EU funds markedly contributed to Lithuania's budget – each year we receive more than 1 billion Euros. Open borders and EU support are the main pillars which 3 out of 4 Lithuanians base their positive opinion of the EU on. This help is especially felt by farmers and also everyone else. One can see stands and signs in many places all over Lithuania, where a road, purifying system plant, an hotel or another object is built or being built, or a school or spa was renovated with EU funds. However, in my opinion, the “Brussels money” is not directed enough at the goal of lessening the social gap. Of course, this depends on the state, which is the receiver of the funds. But social issues need to be reflected in the conditions and goals for the allocation of this support.





*The social gap in Lithuania did not lessen, despite the economic leap of 2000-2008*

## Is Charity for Richer Countries Right?

### Justas Paleckis

After accession to the European Union, the size of the population of the new EU member countries dropped, with the sharpest decline in Lithuania, Poland, Bulgaria and Romania. This was influenced also by emigration to old EU member states. It is a topic that has been often discussed, but this time I would like to touch upon one particular aspect.

The free movement of people, though limited for new member countries, is one of the main achievements and strengths of the EU. However the stick has two ends. The new member states are bleeding by giving up a large part of their most talented and best educated people to much richer old EU members.

It costs approximately € 7,000 on average to produce a student with a bachelor's degree in Lithuania, for doctors already € 26,000 and for a pilot up to € 60,000. It is not



uncommon for students from Lithuania, Latvia and Poland who have not even finished their studies to receive an offer to work in the UK, the Scandinavian countries or elsewhere. Lithuanian Health Ministry calculated that around one third of medical university graduates immediately get employment abroad. Another third leave the country at a later stage.

It is of course cheaper and easier to attract specialists from new EU member states than to produce such students. But this is like charity, where countries that have ended up in a poorer financial situation through no fault of their own, give to much richer countries.

In this case it would not be intelligent to leave all this to the market. Economic growth can slow down in countries that do not have specialists. Those EU countries that are more developed support the newest EU countries with cohesion and structural funds with one hand and take from them with the other. Uneven regional development, and the quick but inadequate progress of countries left behind would negatively impact the economic and social stability and growth of the entire EU.

How can we fix this situation? Banning and/or limiting the possibility to leave are not suitable, and campaigns for encouraging people to stay will not help. The conclusion of researchers is rough: until the differences in wages of the same professions in different countries will be above 10 times or more, the pull to leave will be unstoppable (except in those cases when financial reasons do not play a major role).

At the moment a doctor in Lithuania receives on average, 600-700 Euros after taxes. This sum will double in five to six years. But already now in the UK a doctor receives about £ 7,500 (€ 10,000).

There is a shortage of doctors in the regions and small towns of Lithuania. The situation is similar in other countries that joined the EU in 2004. Approximately 15-30% of medics from Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary are planning on going abroad to work.

It will be only in the distant future, when the differences of the economic and social development of the old and new EU member states will become more even and the acuteness of the problem will lessen. But for now, it seems,





that a registration system for specialists who are regularly working in other EU countries should be created, thereby laying down honourable “rules of the game”. Maybe it would be worth counting the brain drain limit, starting from the time when a specialist that has emigrated to another country, who has a university diploma, works there five years (or three, or ten). From that time a country that has received this specialist would become a country in debt to the country that had educated the specialist.

The EU created a European Globalisation Adjustment Fund to help upgrade workers’ qualifications in companies that have not been able to keep up with world competition, which is often dishonest. I am sure, that a similar “brain drain” fund would lessen these painful results. EU countries, who would take in specialists from other member states, could compensate, at least partially, the countries where these specialists come from for their preparation from such a fund. The sum received by a “bleeding” country could be used to strengthen their educational system. For this, without a doubt, the cooperation of the EU in the field of education would have to be deepened. As stated in the 2009 Manifesto of the Party of European Socialists, during the next term of European Parliament, we intend to address both the problems related to brain drain created by the migration of highly-qualified professionals and skilled workers within Europe and from third countries into Europe.

The brain drain is occurring everywhere, with those from Asia and Africa going to Europe and those from Europe to the US. However neither the US nor these other continents belong to the EU. We need and must put things in order in our own house in a different way, in a fairer way. And only after this are we able to reach an agreement on this question with the countries of other continents.

European Commissioner Jan Figel, answering to my suggestions, showed that the new countries should use their support from structural funds more effectively and, in this way, soften the impact of the brain drain. I do not think that this is a persuasive answer. This is the same European Commission that, in its 2005 Green Paper on an approach towards economic migration, offered to compensate developing countries for the negative impact of the brain

drain. It would be logical if the European Commission would first of all try out and adapt the tools that they had offered to third countries in their own internal market.

I well understand that the suggestions which I offered to the European Commission are not easy to bring to reality. It may take a lot of time and effort to implement them. However I have no doubts, that the resolution of this problem should be included in the agenda of the EU, and we must already take concrete steps in this direction. Solidarity, after all, is the essence of the EU.





## Stork-Stories

### Katrin Saks

When I was a little child, I was told the „stork-story”, as the Estonians call it. This is the story about the way people acquire babies: a stork brings them. At that time, almost half a century ago now, there weren't as many storks or stork nests around as there are now. At that time there were kolkhozes and sovkhoses and intensive farming. After the re-gaining of independence the kolkhozes and sovkhoses were disbanded, and frogs, and after them also storks, returned. However, at the same time as the number of storks increased, the number of new babies actually decreased. In comparison to late 1980s, the number of births in the beginning of the next decade half-diminished; after that it rose again somewhat, but the low birth-rate is still one of the main concerns in Estonia with the

*The social gap in Lithuania did not lessen, despite the economic leap of 2000-2008*



population of 1.3 million. Probably because of our smallness, we feel it more sharply, as a real existential threat.

Although there have never been that many of us. We crossed the magic boundary of one million probably on the eve of WWII, but then the human life lost its value. After the Northern war and a plague during the first half of the 18th century there were about ten times fewer of us than as there are now, yet the people survived. The Estonians are considered to be one of the oldest people of Europe, who have constantly lived at one and the same place. It is another question what has kept us here in this flat windy country in the midst of marshes and forests. Probably many people asked this last summer, when there was much more rain than sun. Last year did justify the characteristic Estonian joke that „we have one season, winter, and the rest of the time we have simply bad skiing weather.” But the bad weather is probably a topic of conversation everywhere, be the weather too cold or hot, wet or dry.

This story, however, is not about weather, it's about people. The problem is not that we feel in any way uncomfortable in our country, even if the population density is eleven times lower than that of Belgium or forty times that of Malta. Actually we enjoy this. Estonian small farms - and traditionally we were rural people - are not side by side, but at such a convenient distance, where one can still see the smoke from the chimney of the other household, but cannot make out what is going on in the yard. Nowadays, when most of the population lives in towns, the distance does not exist in space, but has been re-created in our heads. We don't have the habit of getting to know one's neighbours, or even if we do, then very superficially. A polite „hello” is enough to communicate. If in old days people used to go to church on Sundays then now an urbanite's „church” is a lonely country cottage in the middle of a forest or at the seaside, where one retires to feed one's soul. Thus in a way we have come the full circle back to our early ancestors' religion of trees and stones.

In any case, here we are, and if we fear that our nation is too small, we really mostly fear the bigger size of other peoples. Of course, there is also the danger now that all roads are open, that our young people may disappear in a wide world. Slowly but surely we are also getting more





concerned about whether the jobs will have enough performers, even if the birth-rate in Estonia is presently the highest among Eastern and Central European states. This is partly explained by the fact that the large generation born during 1980s has reached the age of having children. They are also at the age of being active in the labour market so in the nearest years a crisis is not to be expected. At the outset, it is only the schools which feel the collapse in the birth-rate. Every year on 1 September when schools again open their doors, there is also sad news about schools which have been closed.

Ways to raise the birth-rate have been an important topic during nearly all recent elections. The political parties are competing, who offers more. Some want to raise the birth benefit, some to free parents from income tax, others to build homes for young families. A whole range of socio-political instruments is put in action. The local governments second this by increasing birth benefits. Why is that bad in any way? In principle, every kroon that is spent on children is an investment into future. Only the efficiency of different means varies greatly and none of them alone makes a woman decide to have a child. Often it is forgotten that a child will grow and spend for around twenty years, before he or she can stand alone. Thus birth benefits are far from enough. One should be using different means at the same time, systematically and continuously. This, however, is expensive and doesn't really work as an election slogan!

Estonia is quite a modest spender on children in comparison to many other members of the European Union. However, there is one aspect that could be called a luxury. From 2003 one of the parents is paid the so-called „parent's salary". A mother or a father can stay home for 1.5 years and the state compensates 100 per cent of his/her previously earned wage. Those too, who were, for example, students before having a child, are entitled to a benefit. This „miracle weapon" should motivate those potential parents who have postponed having children, because they feared the sudden drop in income, like those who have loans to pay off. The most important aspect, however, is that the state shows that it cares for bringing up a child, considers it „work" on par with salaried work and shares

the parents' responsibility. The statistics show that the number of new mothers, who were previously employed, has somewhat increased; in parallel, however, the percentage of new mothers under 20 has also increased. The greatest task for the immediate years is to make day-care available for everyone. There are no quick solutions, but in Estonia, which already has a very high number of residents born outside the country, the task is a necessity.





## **The Europe of Freedom and the Europe of Equality**

**Adrian Severin**

The main traditional value of the left is equality, while the main traditional value of the right wing is freedom. From this perspective the opposition between the right and the left is basically the opposition between freedom and equality.

The revolutionary (totalitarian) left which dominated politically the Eastern half of Europe during the second part of the XX century, has tried to impose an absolute equality, by transforming the whole of society into a community of proletarians. The Cold War was an ideological confrontation opposing freedom (even if tempered by the action of the reformatting democratic left) to equality. Within the contest of those two, freedom apparently won, since it was able to produce more wealth while forced equality produced stagnation.

After the end of the bipolar international order and the achievement of ideological reunification of Europe it became more obvious that by accepting inequality, freedom generates economic polarisation which leads to social exclusion. This is about the exclusion of the poor but also the self-exclusion of the rich.

In the societies of post-communist transition – like the Romanian – the phenomena of socio-economic polarisation and exclusion were more dramatic for several reasons. First, the systemic transformation of the closed and controlled communist system into an open and free one implied a political movement rightwards. In order to transform the command economy (fully state owned and central mandatory planned) with the maximum speed and minimum of relative costs into a market economy, a therapy of monetary policies (sometimes called „shock therapy”) had to be applied. At the level of society this process was to be translated into a reduction in caring for equality and the acceptance of emerging „corrective inequality” as a useful factor of social restructuring: a

national community of communist type was supposed to regain its cultural and functional diversity, Romanians had to learn that equality implies hierarchy and diversity as well as that freedom does not exclude discipline, responsibility and control.

Second, into a society formed by people who are economically equal (i.e. equally financial resourceless) and where the only private capital was the social one (classified information, personal contacts, private friendships, family networking) the crossing of a phase of primitive accumulation of capital – including the immoral, if not the illicit, transformation of the „social capital” into „financial capital” – was unavoidable. Such a development presupposed an undue transfer of great parts of public property into private accounts within a spontaneous process of self-privatisation and self-restructuring of public assets. Any primitive accumulation of capital generates inequities, inequalities and polarisation. These have frustrated and humiliated a huge number of Romanians, creating among them confusion about the scope of the transition leading them to lose their sense of purpose, as well as confidence in their leaders and making them vulnerable to populist and authoritarian messages. The main social problem in Romania today is not poverty but the polarisation of fortunes coupled with the feeling that the social elevator raises only the few, while it does not work or even goes down for the many. Such feelings become even more dangerous because of the emergence of a so called „left-caviar” formed by leaders who display an opulent prosperity in contrast with their political rhetoric addressed to the impoverished.

Third, the transition in Romania took place on the general background of globalization. Thus the political actor found itself inferior to the groups of economic interests, the public operator inferior to the private agents. In a society under the pressure of the global market and inheriting little internal dynamism, with a traditional taste for state assistance, the productive forces had to be freed and allowed to act in accordance with market rules.

Fourth, Romania had and still has to face the impact of its demographic problems. On the one hand, negative growth determined the ageing of the nation. But on the





other, the regained freedom of movement led to a great loss of labour because of the emigration to other EU countries or to the US.

In such a context the main goal of the Romanian democratic left is not to guarantee equality but to make the inequality bearable, decent and civilized, consequently rehabilitating the public trust in democratic leadership and in the European future of the nation.



## **The Europe of Excellence and the Europe of Brain Draining**



### **Adrian Severin**

After 1989 the general trend in Romania was to change everything. The past was considered to be a meaningless period with no relevance for the future and having to be replaced with new models, imported from the West. This was especially visible in the education system.

The old system, which was in a way the continuation of the historic Romanian school tradition, emphasized the apprehension of as much knowledge as possible, in order to create a broad general cultural knowledge in young people, which would thus allow them to have more alternatives for a successful career. The system, thus based on a quantitative pattern, was meant to insure a high ratio of knowledgeable people and a broad area of selection for outstanding individuals, who would then be involved in research. The quantitative approach was also the expression of a totalitarian regime which was interested to have people with a lot of informative, but little formative, knowledge - hence with small operational capacity, as well as with a reduced ability to change decision making and to challenge official decisions.

The new system, which was promoted after 1989, relied mainly on Western sectional training. Thus, young people would be very early channelled towards one field or another and acquire as much expertise as possible only in that precise field. However, the ways in which this model was applied seriously impinged on the outcomes. The problem was that there was no unitary vision, no master plan, in order to do that. Mainly, each minister tried to impose his own vision, inspired by the West, but only over limited sections of education system. Thus, there was no uniformity in curricula, which led to a process of many generations being sacrificed to experiment various alternatives.

But the most important problem, which affected both the education and research systems, was the critical under-



financing of these fields. A few have realized that without proper investment in these areas there can be no general sustainable progress. Instead, it was preferred to give priority to the economic field and to immediately profitable industries. Given the impressive scale of economic change in the country, funds were barely available for investments other than those allocated for maintenance.

The Romanian research was to some extent famous or at least well-recognized abroad, due to brilliant scientists and their achievements of universal application. Invention and innovation were at some point the main purpose and competition aims among Romanian scientists. Confronted with a sudden lack of subsidies and necessary upgrading, they became a vulnerable category with little perspective within the country. As the leading countries were in a continuous search for new ideas and benefited from sufficient funding to expand their activities, Romanian researchers became more and more attracted by the so called “mirage of the West”, of immigrating to other countries which provided proper conditions for their professional development and for research.

Presently, we witness a real “brain drain”, where the most competitive researchers are being easily “imported” by Western countries. Despite this trend, the Romanian researchers continue to be competitive and come with new and innovative ideas but they cannot apply them in their own country, due to a critical lack of necessary research infrastructure.

A possible remedy for this state was represented by private companies, mainly multinational, which came to Romania and began to invest in training their own young researchers. This could be a solution for keeping researchers home and benefiting from their abilities here.

One of the fields in which Romanian researchers are particularly good is the IT industry. It was one of the few sectors which benefited from proper endowment owing to a quick technological innovation which eventually also reached Romania. Its novelty allowed researchers to make a difference in a short period of time and it is now a well-known fact that the third largest national group in the Silicon Valley of the USA is made up of Romanians.

Nevertheless, much work must also be done in changing stereotypes, such as the one suggesting that the only alternative for success is emigration to the West. This is a long term task and it must be complemented by a real commitment of the state and society to develop and invest in this field.

Another stereotype is related to lifelong education. Even if large groups of people became unemployed as a result of restructuring the industrial sectors, they did not automatically choose to improve their abilities through continued education. Instead, they were waiting for the state to provide new jobs for them, as they were used to do in the past. It was a hard task to convince them, through massive information campaigns, that only by continuing to learn, could they find some (and even better) jobs.

The problem is that, nowadays, Romanian society does not value education as it used to. The example given by people making their fortunes through speculation and opportunity is undermining the credibility of a system based on learning. Therefore, there is still much to be done in order to regain that credibility and restore the proper place of education in our society. Without placing education and scientific creativity at the core of its development strategies, Romania, even if it is an EU member state, has no future.





## Shortcomings of Transformation

### Marek Siwiec

Identifying the most serious social problem in Poland is a daunting task. Poverty, which is transmitted from generation to generation, has diverse and dire consequences. The two major and somewhat interrelated ones are structural unemployment and unequal access to education.

Structural unemployment is, to a large extent, a communist legacy. It is rampant in underdeveloped areas, mainly in the eastern part of Poland, where most of the old-time state-owned agricultural farms used to operate. In these enclaves of poverty, the young are very often unemployed and deprived of any hope of escaping the vicious circle of helplessness, or of prospects of a better future. Needless to say, this phenomenon has tremendous social implications. Despite the fact that unemployment gradually ceases to be the dominant socio-economic problem in Poland, for many families, and in particular for the young people living in these areas, the situation is truly dramatic.

The problem of unequal access to education, on the other hand, is not limited to a specific geographic region. On the contrary, it has far-reaching implications for the whole society. What makes the situation even more urgent is the increasing correlation between poverty and the limited access to high-level education which would enable Polish youth to improve their social status. Most of the people who live in poverty have come to terms with their situation and learned how to deal with the difficult circumstances. However, they often refuse to accept that their bright and gifted children are deprived of the opportunity of self-development and breaking away from the cycle of poverty, helplessness and humility. Quite understandably, the unequal access to education breeds social frustration of a considerable part of the Polish society and creates tensions between various social groups. It also leads to an incredible waste of talent and potential that we,

as a nation, cannot afford.

In order to tackle this issue, I grant scholarships to gifted young people from my constituency. I believe that a loss of their potential is both ethically and economically unacceptable and entails an unduly high social cost. Nevertheless, it is not solely up to social-democratic parties to seek solutions to this pressing problem. Crucial as they are, such initiatives cannot by any means substitute comprehensive policies of the Polish government aimed at addressing the problem of unequal educational opportunities. It should be remembered that the young people who need help today are willing to work hard to achieve their goals and, with a little financial backing, they can accomplish a great deal, not only for their own benefit, but also for the benefit of their families and the entire society.



*Marek Siwiec at the Polish trade unionists' reunion*





## 2. EU-the Energy Union?

### Energy Challenges in Hungary

**Edit Herczog**

Today, energy-security is a chief concern for the international and especially European agenda. This is largely due to the 2006 New Year's surprise when Russia cut energy supplies to the Ukraine. Leaving half of Europe with energy shortages, the unexpected Ukrainian event definitely had a positive effect: it alerted European and American leaders to Russia's energy leverage and its associated risks. The sudden realisation of overdependence on Russian energy has prompted the prioritisation of energy-security in the past two years.

In Hungary electricity generation is largely based on nuclear energy, natural gas and coal. Gas and nuclear power provided each about 35% of generated electricity in 2004. Primary energy supply is based on gas, oil and nuclear power, while the share of renewable sources remains below the EU-27 average. Natural gas and oil dominate this, however, the share of oil, as well as the share of solid fuels, has declined significantly since 1990 as these fuels have been gradually replaced by natural gas. Natural gas supply has increased by 38% since 1990, demonstrating a percentage share far above the EU-27 average (24%). Nuclear energy is the most important domestic source of energy. With regard to this, Hungary has four VVER 440/213 nuclear reactors of 440 MW each in operation at Paks. The reactors are of Soviet design and are considered to be upgradeable to international safety standards. As regards energy efficiency, Hungary introduced an energy efficiency programme with the main objectives of promoting the use of renewable energy sources and improving public energy awareness. The renewable energy potential, though limited, largely remains to be developed in Hungary. Significant near-term potential lies in bioenergy resources and renewable municipal wastes for electricity and heat production, and in geothermal energy

for heat. Given climate change concerns, the share of renewable energy is expected to grow in the future following recent trends and there is strong popular support for nuclear energy to reduce dependence on imports. The share of renewable sources in domestic production could be increased to maximum of only 7% by 2010 and 9% by 2025.

To sum up, today Hungary's import dependency is slightly above the EU-27 average, since the domestic production of nuclear energy, natural gas, coal and oil only partially covers consumption. The total consumption of energy has remained fairly constant in recent years. Although energy consumption and CO2 emissions per capita are low, energy intensity is much higher than the EU-27 average.

In fact, Hungary is probably the most dependent EU Member State on Russian gas. It receives approximately 80% of its supplies from Gazprom, the state-owned Russian energy giant. And as the Kremlin uses its monopoly of east-west gas pipelines, and offers of lucrative bilateral gas deals, to interfere in Europe's energy business, the energy question intrudes more and more in internal affairs, too. When Russia can rely on friends like Germany to block efforts to liberalize European markets and diversify supply, Europe might feel the same way as Hungary. We are afraid to lose control over our energy supplies and we do not want anyone to intervene in our internal affairs. But Russia is much tougher challenge. It is also pushing ahead with South Stream, a €10 billion pipeline to bring gas across the Black Sea to central Europe via the Balkans. Three European Union members, Bulgaria, Hungary and Italy, have signed up, and Austria is interested. This weakens the chances of an EU-backed alternative, Nabucco, already stymied by lack of gas, partly because of Russia's Caspian arm-twisting and also because politics precludes using supplies from Iran.

The aim of Hungary's energy policy is to strike a balance between energy security, economic efficiency and environmental protection. Despite positive developments, Hungary faces a number of challenges. In the electricity sector, it needs to ensure a market without distortions after the process of liberalisation and ownership unbundling





took place. Particular attention is needed to existing long-term contracts of MVM, the national energy company.

During the past decade, the government increased its emphasis on the demand side, but its primary focus remains largely on the supply side: securing supply, introducing competition in the energy markets and diversifying energy sources. Weak emphasis on the energy demand side could be problematic in the future. Some specific sectors of the Hungarian economy will require more focus on increased energy efficiency: in particular, the building sector, small and medium-sized enterprises and the transport sector.



## Will Nuclear Energy, Renewable Sources or the Conservation of Energy Save Us?

**Justas Paleckis**

Energy policy was one of the most important priorities of our activities at the beginning of our term in the European Parliament. At the end of the term, it seems that it is becoming the most important. Energy policy has pushed its way into spheres that seem unrelated to it, such as international relations and security policy, food production and an increase in social division. The prices of heating, electricity, petrol and diesel have a tendency to prance around like a wild mustang, and hit everyone's pockets.

Lithuania along with Latvia and Estonia are different from the rest of the 27 EU Member States in that they together make up an "energy island" in the EU. All three of these countries up to now have been tied to Russia and the Eastern energy grid. At the moment joining the Western grid is still a delicate issue. Lithuania's situation is exceptional in the fact that 60%-70% of its energy is created by the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant. By joining the EU, Lithuania was committed to close this by the end of 2009. It is operated by the last remaining Chernobyl-type reactor. Although the reactor has been upgraded tremendously and is considered to be safe by the experts, agreements need to be kept.

One should keep in mind that 20 years ago a green movement appeared in the country, as Lithuania pushed towards independence and the USSR was beginning to collapse. After all, the Chernobyl catastrophe, consequences of which also touched Lithuania, had been felt just a few years prior. Huge demonstrations took place near the Ignalina Power Plant where people demanded that the plant be closed. The protestors stopped the construction of the third reactor, which at the time was to be the most modern one.

But the greens did not become a strong party, the movement gradually died out, and people got used to living





with a nuclear plant located next to the most beautiful national park. Surveys show that Lithuanians are the biggest supporters of nuclear energy among other EU countries. Of course, this is mostly due to the fact that when the Ignalina is shut down, we will feel a shortage of energy and so, will have to import more gas and petrol from Russia. However, what is most significant here is that there are predictions that the price of electricity will go up precisely because of this.

This is why the suggestion to build a new nuclear power plant in the very same place, using the infrastructure that has already been created, has garnered approval. Latvia, Estonia and Poland voiced their interest to participate in this project, with plans to implement it in 2015, or perhaps only by 2020. However a more serious discussion about the pluses and minuses of nuclear energy in Lithuania has not materialised. No one is talking about the sensitive and expensive problems of the burial of radioactive waste in our small country, where there are no mountains or rocks, just sandy terrain.

For twenty years already there have been discussions in Lithuania and Poland of an electricity bridge between these two countries, which would allow the Baltic countries to join the Western European energy grid. Unfortunately, no headway has been made in furthering these projects. The priority of Warsaw is an electricity bridge with Germany. However, Brussels' attention to this "energy island" and its earmarked financial support, allows one to believe that in 5-7 years' time we should have a link with the West through Poland. There are also plans for another energy bridge between Sweden and Lithuania or Latvia.

With attention focused on a policy for nuclear energy, the energy from renewable sources has been left in the shadows. Now hydroelectric power, wind turbines and bio-fuels make up 9 % of all energy produced. Implementing the goal of 20 % of the EU's energy generated from renewable sources by 2020 will not be easy.

We remind ourselves all too rarely in Lithuania that the best, cleanest and cheapest energy is energy that is saved, however, this is worth keeping in mind. After all, as to energy consumption - calculated in the use of energy per unit of production - Lithuania trails Western European

countries 4.5 times.

Around 60% of all flats in Lithuania are in the block apartment buildings, built anything from 20 to 40 years ago. They are poorly insulated and the seams between blocks, windows and doors are prone to heat leakage. In other words a large part of heating goes into the air, while the bills for inhabitants continue to balloon. Only 10% of these buildings are renovated. I have no doubts that the limit of no more than 2% of structural funds set down by the EU to use for this purpose is outdated. On my initiative, supported by the Socialist group and especially by colleagues from Poland and Germany, the European Parliament is encouraging the Commission to increase this limit to 4%-5%. This issue is very relevant for the new countries, because it will allow them to save energy more effectively and thus, fight climate change.



*60-70 % of Lithuania's energy is created by Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant*





## How can the Czech Republic Face an Insecure Energy Future?

### Libor Roucek

The European Union and its Member States are becoming more and more dependent on external energy supplies. If the various scenarios are confirmed, the EU will have to cover more than 70 percent of its energy needs through imports by 2020. This will increase Europe's vulnerability to volatile prices on oil markets and to the challenges of changing geopolitical context. At the same time, heavy dependence of our economy on fossil fuels constitutes restrictions on sustainability within the current modes of production, having in mind the threat of climate change and final depletion of limited hydrocarbon resources which cannot be replaced in many other industrial sectors. The European Union and its citizens are well aware of these challenges. That's the reason why the EU has proposed ambitious energy and climate change package which should make a turn to an environmental Union. However, I'm convinced that each Member State will have to take over its portion of responsibility for our energy future. Although solidarity between European states is a precondition for common energy policy, this shouldn't make some states become light-headed in their national approaches to security of energy supplies or to the sustainability of their economies. The European Union's ambitious strategy for sustainable, secure and competitive energy will not be possible without sharing the accountability among all Member States for changing Europe's patterns of energy consumption and citizen's lifestyle.

In spite of being far more autarchic in electricity production than many other EU Member States, the

Czech Republic is taking the issues related to its energy systems very seriously. It's acknowledged by political representation, academics, civil society and business community that there are still many problems connected to the current consumption and production patterns. They require systematic action towards more effective and, at the same time, more environmentally and business-friendly national energy policy. The Czech Republic has to define its national strategy which will safeguard a high level of certainty for both consumers and entrepreneurs concerning the future development of energy policy. There are many questions to be answered. How will we use limited domestic energy resources? What will be the future approach of the Czech government to nuclear energy? How can we change modes of energy consumption and increase energy efficiency? And, last but not least,



*Nuclear power plants  
have important role  
in Czech energy mix*





how will we be able to employ green technologies and renewable sources in order to make our society sustainable? Problems such as rising oil prices and uncertainty about Russian natural gas supplies resulted in the establishment of an ad-hoc commission of experts with the purpose to draft general guidelines of the future national energy strategy. Nevertheless, there are only a limited number of options with technologies already available or under development. The Czech Republic shouldn't refuse any of these options regardless of the Commission's conclusions.

The Czech Republic bears many reminiscences of a planned economy which gave priority to heavy industry and lacked structured approach to energy saving. Therefore the energy intensity remains still above the EU and OECD average, e.g. the energy consumption per GDP unit is almost twice as much as in neighbouring Austria or still, higher by half than in Germany. Accordingly, energy efficiency represents one of the main issues to be dealt with in the upcoming years. There are still deficiencies when it comes to energy intensity of buildings and industry. It is estimated that almost 60 percent of energy used in households and office buildings can be saved by better insulation and more efficient appliances, including ecological bulbs. Indeed industry energy performances can be improved as well saving about one quarter of current energy consumption. Indeed efficiency and savings will not be reached without changing citizens' habits and lifestyle, including the ways they use public transportation systems or act as consumers. There is a window of opportunity which needs to be addressed in national strategy by stimulating more responsible behaviour.

While cutting back energy intensity is crucial for sustainability of the Czech economy, the use of domestic resources has to be seriously addressed in national strategy too. Since there are no substantial oil

or natural gas deposits in the Czech Republic and potential of wind, sun and water is limited due to geographical dispositions of my country, coal and uranium remains the main relevant sources in our national energy mix. Therefore refusing a priori these technologies would only lead to increasing dependence on imports of oil, gas or even electricity with all economic, social and security consequences. The transition of power supply system from coal and uranium to natural gas, as proposed by some political representatives, is not sustainable solution and would in short-term harm the Czech economy. However the Czech Republic cannot rely on old-style thermal power plants which meet most of current energy needs. The solution can be seen in new coal technologies applying innovations such as carbon capture and sequestration systems and more effective processing of fuel. These clean thermal power plants would turn huge coal resources located in Northern Bohemia into an acceptable and relatively climate friendly source of energy which could be used for several decades. However this will depend on political decision to lift existing ecological limits on future mining in this coal rich region.

The second option for the future is nuclear energy which represents interesting alternative in the time of skyrocketing prices of oil. Under these circumstances this source of relatively cheap and clean energy passes through its renaissance. Already charged-off nuclear energy is booming in many parts of the world. Therefore it will be foolish to abandon this option regarding the fact that the Czech Republic is relatively autarchic with uranium deposits able to cover domestic consumption for many decades. Hence, research and development of new technologies, especially fourth generation of reactors, should be supported, instead of abandoning this source forever.

Last but not least, the Czech energy mix cannot





leave out renewable resources which are more and more competitive with fossil fuels. Although technological advance in this field makes renewable energy more applicable even in unfavourable climatic and geographical conditions of the Czech Republic, there is still significant gap between my country and Western Europe. The Czech Republic falls below the EU's average with only 6 percent of its energy needs covered by renewable energy resources. In order to change this situation more public support needs to be given to development of alternative resources including the use of biomass, wind, solar and even waste for energy purposes.

There is no simple solution which would meet future energy needs of many EU Member States. The strategic approach has to include all available options from increasing energy efficiency to renewable resources. There is no alternative to this complex answer to challenges arising from our dependence on modern forms of energy unless we are prepared to abandon one of our main goals - to make our energy consumption sustainable, to increase security of supplies, to insure competitiveness of European companies and last but not least to prevent a new rise of energy poverty.

## The European Community of Energy

### Adrian Severin

For the EU today energy is as important as was coal and steel for the first European Community. The founding myth of the united Europe is peace. After centuries of wars, a warless continent became the European dream. To make this dream come true the founding fathers imagined a political project served by an economic instrument with social impact: a common development achieved by putting in common what were then the main resources for development. A similar level of development allowed the members of the Community to agree on a single basis of shared values for organizing their societies and thus an institutional superstructure of transnational institutions emerged, working for all and making new European civil wars (since in Europe all wars were civil) impossible. The strategy of common development is still valid, but and this requires a huge amount of energy resources. The problem is that if in the past it was Europe which possessed main capacities for producing coal, nowadays main energy sources are out of Europe.

The access to energy resources and the diversification of suppliers, the multiplication and security of routes for energy transportation, the development of renewable energy sources as an alternative to the classic ones, technological progress and the economic cohesion able to establish an appropriate equilibrium between energy consumption and supply in such a way as to keep under control the energy prices and at the same time to protect the environment, are targets of paramount importance which determined, among others, Romania to show interest for joining the EU. These form a package of key priorities for Romania within EU.

From the energy resources point of view, Romania is in a more favourable position than most of the EU members. Once an important world supplier of crude oil and natural gas, still today Romania is able to extract and process its own hydrocarbons. The quantity is not enough for its own





needs, however, it covers about half of it. Consequently, our petrochemical industry is well developed and able to process raw materials coming from Eurasia at the very gates of the EU.

Romanian energy capacity also includes a number of hydropower stations – using the potential of quite a number of important mountain rivers, unfortunately often affected by the lack of rainfall; but also thermo power stations powered by a rather low quality coal and a nuclear power station – built in cooperation with Canada and using one of the most secure technologies in the world. For the current Romanian needs the nuclear power is absolutely necessary and in Romania there are no political forces to contest that.



Romania is potentially an important country for the transit of energy. From this point of view it benefits from its Black Sea harbours (some of the biggest in Europe) where oil and gas terminals are already built, as well as a part of the old energy transportation network developed within the former Soviet block. The Romanian routes are perfectly secure since they pass far from any area of war and socio-political instability or from any possibility of direct control and intervention of any major supplier. (This made Romania able to help the Republic of Moldova when Russia stopped supplying energy to it, largely for political reasons.) Therefore Romania should be regarded as an asset for the EU energy security.

In spite of this, there are no major trans-European pipe lines in function, under construction or even planned to be built on the Romanian territory. The explanation is political. An oil pipeline from Constanta Black Sea harbour to Trieste (Italy) was designed by the Romanian Government in agreement with other interested parties but the project failed because of the US objection to the pipe crossing Slobodan Milosevic's Serbia. An alternative route through Hungary was found to be financially and economically unsustainable. Washington favoured the Baku-Cheyhan pipeline. However, the insecure character of this route was proved by the Russian-Georgian conflict in August 2008.

An important gas pipeline to cross Romania was the one known as Nabucco project. Though an EU priority, its viability was virtually undermined – as well as some other similar projects – by the concurrent arrangements (e.g. South Stream, Blue Stream, Burgas-Alexandropolis) agreed on bilateral bases between Russia and different member states of the Union (e.g. Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Austria, Hungary). While Romania refused to engage in any contract which was out of a pan-European interest or one which could give the financial and commercial control to somebody else than the EU, Russia took advantage of the Kosovo dispute between Serbia and the US as well as the short-sighted national egoism of some of the EU member states in order to sign agreements on energy corridors circumventing the Romanian territory. Since the level of resources is limited and other important costumers from various parts of the world are plentiful (e.g. China),





it is obvious that the multiplication of the bilateral projects prevailed, whereas the EU ones were left without much support.

What is to be done under such circumstances, also bearing in mind that for Russia any European coherent energy strategy is perceived as being against its vital interests? Firstly, Romania believes that the EU must agree on a common energy policy comprising by a common strategy, jointly financed and placed in an appropriate European legal frame. Such a policy should include programs for technological development and should be the starting point for a European common foreign energy policy. A mere foreign policy without a corresponding internal policy is nonsense.

At the same time, if the EU cannot escape from its dependence on Russia's supplies, it should do the necessary in order to make Russia dependent on the EU customers. To that end, while accepting and even stimulating the bilateral energy agreements with Russia (Kremlin could not be obliged to negotiate with the EU if it really does not want it), EU must develop an internal coherent system of energy transportation, linking all its members in such a way as to assure that the supplies received by one profit to all and that any possible political manipulation of the energy supplies directed against one member will be neutralized automatically, both from technical and political points of view, by the federalization of all members. Thus Russia will be in fact, and in a positive manner, integrated in the EU energy strategy.

Finally, the EU should use its technological assets in order to help Russia, in exchange for opening its markets, to avoid becoming a hydrocarbons dependent power. Such dependence is not favourable for the EU on a short to medium terms but it will be disastrous for Russia in a medium and short range timeline.

To reach all these strategic goals the EU should become an "energy union" as well.

## Not Enough "Energetic" Europe

**Marek Siwiec**

In Poland, the issue of energy has very strong political connotations. For the past several years, there has been an ongoing discussion concerning diversification of energy sources, which in practice implies ensuring energy independence from Russia. The list of possible solutions usually mentioned in this context includes building a nuclear power plant, using our domestic resources of gas and coal, the latter being currently a major source of energy in Poland. In addition, unrealistic ideas of importing gas from Norway or transporting oil by boats are being promoted in some circles. Many politicians claim that it is possible to create entirely alternative sources of energy for a medium-sized country such as Poland and, quite naturally, such visions are enthusiastically received by the general public, particularly since they entail a lesser dependence on Russia, which has already proved several times that it is capable and willing to play the energy card in order to blackmail both smaller and bigger countries. Even the greatest alternative energy enthusiasts, however, find it hard to believe that we may go alternative over the next 20 years.

It goes without saying that Poland should take urgent steps to ensure the security of its energy supply. Our country should spare no effort to develop alternative energy sources and promote energy-saving measures. But these actions alone are merely complementary to ensuring a healthy energy balance. In this context, the efforts wasted on pointless deliberations about non-existing or unrealistic alternatives to the problem in question should be diverted to a serious debate on the political and economic instruments that could prevent Russia from ever again using energy as a weapon of choice in its foreign policy. A truly united EU, with a solid energy policy, where a threat to one member state would trigger an immediate reaction of the whole Community, can provide such a guarantee.

Another problem related to alternative energy sources





*Marek Siwiec at a workshop  
on Poland's energy sector*

is their cost. Unfortunately, most of them are much more expensive and it remains unclear who should cover the difference, the consumer or his or her state and, if the latter, from what budget. For lack of clear answers to these crucial questions, Poland cannot benefit from the project of the Odessa-Brody pipeline, which could transfer the Caspian Oil from the Black Sea to Plock. Oil delivered in this way is more expensive than Russian oil and nobody is willing to pay a higher price, process the oil and sell it further. This example confirms the thesis that when discussing the issue of energy, there is no escape from politics. Yet, politics alone should not dominate the debate by any means. Otherwise, neither Poland nor Europe will ever be able to come up with the urgently needed constructive solutions. The Russian authorities know all too well how to play their energy card to achieve their foreign policy goals. Through taking over various industrial networks, they aim at securing the dominant position on the energy market in order to dictate other countries their conditions. However, Russia should also understand that the euro is equally important, if not more, than its billions of cubic meters of gas and millions of barrels of oil.



### 3. Environment: We Swim or Sink Together

**Let's Change Our Lifestyle!**



#### **Justas Paleckis**

In the spring of 2008 I participated in a discussion during the "Green Week" in Brussels concerning the attitude towards environmental protection in EU countries of the 20th century and in countries that had joined the EU in the 21st century. Reluctantly, I said that it is impossible to win an election to the European Parliament in Lithuania if I would place the problems of environmental protection and climate change in the first place. Today people are much more concerned about inflation, especially the jump in the prices of food, heating and petrol, the gap between the richest and the poorest, the limping-along of education and health care. In my opinion, this could be said about other countries that joined the EU in the 21st century.

At the same time MEPs from Western European countries, especially from Scandinavia, affirm that in their countries people understand that all other problems are becoming much less significant in the face of protecting the environment and stopping climate change in time. And in the election Manifesto of the Party of European Socialists, environmental protection is elevated to the top of the agenda. One could say, that rich and satisfied Western Europe has reached such a level of prosperity and consciousness (which the new EU Member States still need to strive to reach), that the protection of the environment is becoming the most important issue. However, I am certain that the faster the EU Member States of the 21st century fall in love with environmental protection with gusto, and avoid waiting for a solution to other problems, the better it will be for them, Europe and the whole world.

I would make a distinction between two things, which are the viewpoints of the country and that of its citizens. The country should strive to create conditions so that its citizens can live healthy and efficient life, not damaging



the environment so it would not only be beautiful, but also valuable. This can be done through taxes and other financial instruments, which should be unsparing towards those who like luxury at the expense of the environment, and a wasteful lifestyle. It is ironic, that the poor contribute the least towards climate change (unlike the owners and stock holders of companies, electric power stations, and transport companies), while the rising costs and prices that are an unavoidable result of these things hurt precisely those who have a small income.

Meanwhile, citizens should always remember a saying that never loses its relevance: the environment is the home of all of us. A home where it is not right to harm either animals or plants, a home which cannot be flooded with waste. In Lithuania, 90% of waste is taken to landfills and only 10% is sorted and recycled. Our cities and rural areas are clean and well-kept, which is something that is noticed with envy by those who go to Lithuania from the West. But unfortunately, in the forests and on the side of the roads, there are small hills of mounting rubbish. Though I saw gloomier images in Naples, this is of course not an excuse.

It is not only the government, but also NGOs that should become fans of putting a stop to climate change. Much depends on businessmen and women. Our allies are businesses that adapt the newest technologies and invest in science and research.

There are number of spots where one can find unspoiled nature in Lithuania. These natural resorts are protected and interesting not only for our citizens, but also those from elsewhere. However, some of them are threatened by the invasion of Big Money, even such pearls as Neringa and Palanga or our national parks. Money, big money, unfortunately, pierces the fencing of laws and resistance of individuals. Buildings that obstruct the view of the most beautiful places, scenic lakes surrounded by luxurious cottages which, as a result, become inaccessible, and a desire for profit in spa towns which gives rise to horrible high-rise monsters.

The European Union has declared global warming to be the main threat to security: already now 2 billion people on earth experience water shortages, while the flow of refugees from places that are unfit to live in continue.

However, the alarm bell, looking from Lithuania, seems to be ringing off in the distance somewhere, with local problems drowning it out. Lithuania, especially with the collapse of a large part of Soviet-era industry, is certainly not the worst contributor to global warming by any means.

Luckily, a green attitude towards life is already spreading in many schools with the help of the EU. Recently I have organized an essay competition for school children, their parents and grandparents, called "Letters of Two Generations to the European Parliament – What will the European Union be like in 20 years?" I was delighted to learn that whilst writing about the future, the youth are most concerned about environmental protection and climate change.

Similarly, to pursue the same goal, I organised an action entitled "Let's Help the Earth, Let's Help Ourselves – Change Your Lifestyle!" Each of those who wanted to contribute provided their mail or e-mail address and received a host of exciting and fun recommendations on how to contribute to saving energy and putting a stop to



*Man has made the planet ill  
and man is obligated to heal  
it. Seashore in Lithuania.*





climate change in our everyday lives. This is especially important during the times of crises. While protecting nature and saving energy, we also protect our pockets. I am happy that many people responded to an invitation for change, with most being young people.

At meetings in various parts of Lithuania, especially in schools, I am often asked: have I chosen a green lifestyle myself? I respond that I do my utmost to. I like going on foot, riding a bicycle or using public transport much more than using a car. I am never without my pedometer and on average I walk about 10 kilometres a day (I counted that in one year the total amount of kilometres is like me walking from Vilnius to Brussels and back). In Brussels, my office is on the 13th floor and at least once a day I walk the stairs. In Strasbourg it is only on the 7th floor, so I try to use the lift as little as possible.

I am convinced that either we, at least most of us, will have to change our habits, limit our use and luxury, or the Earth will turn more and more into a wasteland. Man has made the planet ill and man is obligated to heal it.

## **The Environment in the Czech Republic: Achievements and Challenges**



### **Libor Roucek**

Those who remember the life in the Czech Republic (then Czechoslovakia) before the Velvet Revolution must acknowledge the enormous progress which has been made in the environmental area during the last nineteen years. Fans of winter sports from home and abroad who visited the Giant Mountains in the northern part of Bohemia were confronted with already dead or slowly dying forests that had been damaged by steady acid rains. Curfews due to smog and inversion in the most industrialized parts of the country were part of daily life of hundreds of thousands inhabitants. Serious illnesses like respiratory infections, lung diseases or cancer affected young and old without exception.

The regime change of 1989 has brought new hope to many. The transformation and restructuring of the economy had an immediate effect on the environmental situation of the country. Heavy industries like mining or metallurgy had to reduce their production or shut down completely due to increasing competition from abroad as well as failed privatisation projects designed by right-wing governments in the 1990s. This period saw a substantial reduction of traditional coal-fired power stations that were regarded as the most serious polluters.

In the mid-1990s an important decision was taken by then Czech government to continue constructing a new nuclear power plant in Temelín, a little town in South Bohemia. In terms of the environment, the project (seen by some as controversial due to the fact that a brand-new modern US technology was to be implemented in a construction site started already in the 1980s under Russian supervision) proved to be a success. Temelín, together with the second Czech nuclear power plant in Dukovany, has been contributing to the energy-mix of the Czech Republic and aids the environment because the nuclear technology is completely free of greenhouse gas emissions.



The efforts by the Czech governments during the 1990s to improve the environmental condition of the country were complemented by the European Union in the beginning of the first decade of the new century via the so-called Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession (ISPA) which was designed to prepare candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe for EU accession in areas of transport, environment and technical assistance. In the first two years of the ISPA program, in 2000 and 2001, 27.82 mil EUR respectively 26.15 mil EUR were allocated for environmental projects in the Czech Republic. In 2000, two projects involving the rehabilitation of sewage systems in the cities of Ostrava and Brno were carried out aiming at reducing pollution of local rivers and taking a significant step towards fulfilling EU environmental standards. In 2001 the EU assisted in three similar projects in the region of North Bohemia and the cities of Jihlava and Olomouc. Further projects followed over the whole ISPA-period of 2000-2006.

Regarding the current programming period of 2007-2013, the Czech Republic has been very successful in securing the highest allocation of EU money per capita among all EU Member States. Thus, in the years 2007-2013 the Czech Republic will receive some 26.7 billion EUR in financial assistance from the EU's Structural and Cohesion funds. Thereof almost 5 billion EUR (about 18.5% of the whole sum) are allocated for the operational program "Environment". The money should be used according to the priority areas set up by the Ministry of Environment and approved by the European Commission which include: Improvements in water utilisation infrastructure and reduction of flood risks; Improvements in quality of atmosphere and emissions reduction; Exploitation of sustainable energy resources; Improvements in waste handling and clearing old environmental pollution; Reducing industrial pollution and risks to the environment; Improvements in natural surroundings and landscape; Development of infrastructure for environmental education, consultancy and training.

Although the environmental conditions in the Czech Republic have substantially improved over the last nineteen years - also thanks to the generous assistance of the

European Union - a lot remains to be done. The Czech Republic is facing a number of environmental challenges which still have to be tackled. One of the fundamental problems has been the air quality due to the increasing level of vehicle use. The number of registered vehicles has increased by 4% for private and 14% for goods vehicles year-on-year. The high average age of the vehicles complicates efforts to reduce transportation-related pollution. The majority of goods are transported by road (71%) which imposes the greatest burden on the environment of all types of goods transport. In 2006, the pollution from mobile sources reached 13% of total greenhouse emissions. Thus, measured greenhouse gas emissions in the Czech Republic remain among of the highest in the European Union.

The high energy intensity of the Czech economy has been another major environmental problem. Though constantly falling, the energy intensity of the Czech economy remains significantly higher than the European average. Another sensitive issue is the production of waste which in the last period has risen year-on-year. Although yields from the separated collection of packaging waste have increased, the level of recycling of total municipal waste is stagnating and does not reach even half the





*The Environment in the Czech Republic has significantly improved in the last 20 years. However many damages still remain from the past*



recycling levels in another EU Member States like Austria, Germany or the Netherlands. Also the health of forests in the Czech Republic represents a serious environmental challenge since - measured according to defoliation levels in evergreen trees more than 60 years old - it is among the worst in Europe.

And last but not least, pollution from household heating is another source of greenhouse gas emissions in the Czech Republic. The Czech government is currently preparing a subsidy program which will be aimed at energy savings and utilization of renewable sources of energy (biomass, solar panels) for heating and hot water in apartments and family houses. The use of the renewable sources of energy for heating of residential premises will help to solve the issues of local boiler rooms which use low quality brown coal. These steps will lead not only to greenhouse emission reductions but also to the decrease of air pollution. Since these measures cannot be co-financed from the operational programme "Environment", the government will use revenues from the sales of emission units to other countries (e.g. Japan) under the flexible mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol. The revenues from these sales will be assigned to the State Environment Fund of the Czech Republic which thus will be able to open new subsidy programs for households, perhaps as soon as early 2009.

A significant contribution to the improvement of the environmental standards in the Czech Republic has been made by the Czech Social Democratic Party which has governed the country in two consecutive terms from 1998 till 2002 and from 2002 till 2006. Environmental policy has been one of the three major pillars of social democratic policies in the Czech Republic, alongside social policy and the focus on increasing the competitiveness of the Czech economy. With regard to global warming and climate change the Czech Social Democratic Party recognises the grave challenges the European Union and the world are facing and it is committed to tackle these problems with all means available. During the current Czech EU Presidency in the 1st half of 2009, the social democrats in the Czech Republic are ready to cooperate also with the current right-wing government in order to push the EU's environmental agenda forward.

## Great Things Have Small Starting Points

### Katrin Saks

One of the largest civic initiatives ever in Estonia, called Teeme ära (Let's get it done) took place last spring, in the course of which volunteers cleaned up Estonia. "Cleaned up" in the literal sense, as the participants cleared away rubbish which had been illegally dumped in forests or at roadsides. The number of volunteers who registered with the organisers on 3rd May was 50 000, the equivalent of about 130 000 in Lithuania or 1.4 million in Poland, considering the respective population sizes. The actual figure was even bigger, because there were a lot of people inspired by the Teeme ära example, who independently tidied up the neighbourhood of their home or summer-house on 3rd May. Altogether the 1300 trailers took away 6000 tons of rubbish, 80 per cent of which, it was hoped, could be re-cycled.

The Teeme ära initiative undoubtedly achieved a lot. Still, although a few good little cleaners honestly confessed to the TV-reporter that they too had sometimes dropped and failed to pick up a candy-wrap, I am convinced that most of the volunteer-brigade had a conscience clear of dumping rubbish themselves. Thus the cleaning up was a one-off campaign, which will not influence the behaviour of the rubbish baddies. But who are they? I know the feeling of looking at rubbish heaps in the forest near my home and wondering: what sort of creatures would do a thing like



*You Better Work! Even in Mongolia, if necessary...*





that? But the rubbish vandals are neither Martians nor Russians (who get blamed for a lot of different problems), but people among ourselves.

Near my home on the outskirts of Tallinn is one of the most beautiful contemporary school buildings, an expensive privately-owned school at the seaside under big old trees. The architects have succeeded in incorporating the building complex into the surrounding nature in a near-magical way. One might assume that in such an environment one grows up to be a sensitive soul and a nature child. There is a forest path that connects the school-house with a supermarket. There, a passer-by can make a sociological study of the children's preferences among different brands of chocolates and potato crisps, and the changing fashions in cigarettes. The overwhelming winners of the most recent years are the Fazer's bakery products, especially the baguettes. The plastic bags they are packed in lie everywhere.

Apparently none of the teachers of that school has ever happened to take that forest path, otherwise they would certainly have taught the children ... the use of rubbish bins, for example. One could even learn to make practical things like that in a handiwork class. But no, nothing of the kind! The rubbish situation on the forest path is tough competition for a street in Naples or a roadside in India.

This forest too was cleaned up by the campaign in May, but already half a year later it can be seen that one has not learned much from it. The rubbish is only one thing, but the attitude towards rubbish characterises our attitude towards environment more generally. It shows how alienated from the environment we actually are. Twenty years ago, the Estonian independence movement started with the struggle against Moscow's plan to mine phosphorite in Estonia, which would have ruined the environmental balance and endangered ground water. This struggle was victorious, but the following years have frequently provided cases when the desire for quick enrichment or simple carelessness has damaged the environment in a fatal way. Probably nothing will change before the whole system of study and upbringing starts paying more attention to environmental problems. Nothing will change, unless we again start perceiving ourselves as a part of nature.

## Clean Europe

### Adrian Severin

For a long time after 1989 the environmental problem was not a real issue of debate in Romanian society. Other issues were considered to be more important and, so, channelled all the resources. Economic hardships used to obscure everything else, including degradation of environment.

During the communist regime, the shortage of resources imposed by an exclusively export-based economy also had a good influence by promoting the virtues of recycling among the population. Once the communist regime was ousted, though, these good habits were also rejected, due to the common prejudice that everything from the previous regime was bad. Thus, it even became a shameful thing to care about the environment.

Another inheritance from the past was responsible for the continuous degradation of the environment in Romania. During the communist period private property was banned, making state the owner of all means of production. This was meant to create a sense of good public ownership to the people who would appreciate virtues of such a society and be content. Instead, a sense of indifference developed, whereby the public good was in fact considered as nobody's goods, or at best the goods of the party





nomenclature. The only element preserving order and providing cleaning services through a repressive system was the state.

Thus, after the repressive state was no longer in power, it became of no interest whether the common goods were degraded or the urban landscapes and the countryside became unclean. There was no sense of public individual responsibility and everyone in the society used to put the blame elsewhere. That was how, at some point, everyone noticed that things couldn't work like that anymore and some sense of environmental awareness appeared after 2000.

Things began to improve with the development of such awareness in the young generation. In this regard, ecological education found a new proper ground to grow and develop. Nevertheless, there is still a growing need for such education at the scale of the entire society so that people would learn more about the consequences of their reckless actions.

Before and during the transition period in Romania, the main problem was that quick economic development was favoured instead of sustainable development. The industrial inheritance of the communist period was made up of many polluting factories. The extensive development characteristic of a political regime which had as an ideological priority the catching up with the capitalist countries and the demonstration of the superiority of the communist command economy over the market economy is responsible for that. During the most decadent stages of the old regime, on the other hand, the lack of funds for technological modernization and the rehabilitation of the industrial assets increased even further the general level of pollution. Being confronted with the market rules during the process of reforms meant to transform the command economy into a market one and, so, the communist industrial heritage became even less productive and thus more polluting. Therefore, gradually, the old plants were closed and the menace seemed to wither away. However, those which survived and became profitable began to be a problem for the environment. The post-communist Romania crossed a primitive accumulation of capital period. Only after EU norms were introduced, with

necessary pollution filters and other upgrading, did the situation improve.

However, the development of a market economy, included into the permanent flux of the global markets, was also marked by development of consumption and its bad habits, common to Western countries in the 50s and 60s. It was a good thing that living standards were thus improved, but at the present rate of development the general lack of environmental awareness could become a hazard for the environment.

For example, the number of cars in Bucharest increased from a few hundred thousand at the beginning of the 90s to over 1.5 million today, while the population remained at the level of 2 million people. It is obvious and even visible that such a number creates additional pollution and involves a necessary upgrade of the infrastructure. But this upgrade only means additional roads and concrete structures, thus multiplying the pollution sources and hurting the natural habitat. Nowadays, nobody thinks about building parks but only highways. This is regrettable and shows that we have not yet reached that level, present in the Nordic countries, at which we will create viable environmentally-friendly devices and structures.

For this reason, it is of utmost importance that ecological education is developed and promoted throughout society. People need to change their harmful habits and become aware and responsible of the consequences of their deeds. We must be conscious and think more about the future generations rather than merely about our individual present.





## 4. Breakthrough in Science and Research - to be or not to be?

### To Learn How to Teach

#### Edit Herczog

The order and system of Hungarian education always followed the Prussian education principles. They still define many elements of our education today: exclusively authoritarian schools teach too much lexical knowledge. We all know that the system needs to be reformed; the last 20 years were dedicated to making these significant changes.

Experiments in education mean great responsibility. We tried many changes. Some were successful, some were not, but we shaped the framework of a new system and now we wait until time gives us a grade. The educational revolution has great disadvantages, too and some of them are for the teachers. Every year they work more for less money and get little respect for it. They have to adapt to every change and to provide continuity, have to face unemployment and tolerate bad working conditions. With demographic trends, as the number of children grows, huge infrastructure needs to be operated, but the capacity can hardly be maintained.

Hungarian children go to day-nursery for three years before starting the primary school at the age of 6 or 7. The system of day nurseries and primary schools operate very well; 10-year old children reach good results in PIRLS reports. Problems start a bit later in upper school and 5 years later Hungarian children show some worrying signs in PISA-tests, where our children's results are average or below. This shows that the Hungarian education system is good enough to teach the necessary fundamental skills, but fails to teach how to use the knowledge, the students do not learn to handle open, unsecure situations, cannot use their knowledge in unfamiliar situations. Our comparative failure is coloured by other indexes: the results are better if we also consider the GDP or the financial background of Hungary.

The biggest problem of the results of PISA is the fact that the education system does not narrow the social disparities: if a child arrives at school from a disadvantageous background, he remains in a disadvantageous situation. This means that the results of the students are deeply determined by the social and financial position of the parents.

After leaving school children face the difficulties of a reorganised high school system. Our traditional high education is dual: the 3-4 year long high school and 4-5 year long university training were separated. After the implementation of the Bologna criteria, Hungarian universities amended their trainings to fit to the expectations of a separated bachelor and master's period. We do not have enough experience about the new system yet, but we already face with the 'problem of plenty'. Many towns regarded high schools as some kind of status symbol and opened new institutions without measuring the need of the labour market. As arts faculties are cheaper to maintain and more popular, a lot of new human trainings appeared in the last years to support the ambition of the local universities. They mostly reflect the current popular sciences: communication, media, press, HR, PR, marketing. Plenty of young people fancy themselves as media stars, international lawyers and journalist and find their first job as secretaries or insurance agents. The number of graduates is higher than ever, but more and more of them will never practice their studied profession. Simultaneously, the labour market is hungry for specialised engineers, medical doctors and skilled workers.

It is difficult to solve the above contradiction, because a diploma wildly became a minimum expectation. Parents expect a diploma from their children, women from boyfriends, employers from administrators. It is difficult to accept that less education can be more if it is carefully chosen: while a carpenter, a plumber will always have a good job and a good salary, the arts student has to take the risk of unemployment.



*Nuclear renaissance  
in Hungary: Paks*



## Many Lasers and Many Universities

### Justas Paleckis

When I was an ambassador 10 years ago in London, I was often invited to events by British universities or companies for special occasions, which were the launch of lasers made in Lithuania. Lithuania occupies a proud third place in the world after Japan and the US for the export of lasers used for scientific research. Lithuania's laser manufacturing companies think about the future: each year 5-7% of net sales revenue is allocated to applied scientific research. Laser technology in Lithuania continues a 30 year long tradition and receives many orders from EU countries and NATO.

Lasers, bio-technics and semiconductors are the fields where Lithuanian science has occupied a strong international position already for a few decades. We also like to boast that, based on the number of registered mobile telephones per capita, we are in second place in the world behind Ireland (incidentally, perhaps this is why this country is so popular for emigrants from Lithuania).

The primary wealth of Lithuania is that its people, who foster an interest in science, are curious and full of ideas. According to data from the World Bank, Lithuania is in 20th place in the world in terms of educating its inhabitants, and 31st place in the use of information technology and efficiency in its economy. In the same study by the World Bank on the knowledge economy in Eastern and Central Europe, Lithuania surpasses its neighbours and occupies 3rd place, according to the development of the educational system as a pillar of knowledge economy. In the World Bank's report "Doing Business 2008", Lithuania was ranked 26th out of 178 world economies in terms of ease of doing business.

There are now 15 universities, 2 of which are private, and 17 colleges operating in Lithuania. Surely this is too many for a country of 3.4 million people. One has to agree, that quantity does not always grow from quality by any means. The reform of studies will encourage strengthening

of the universities and of decrease in their number. More colleges and technical schools should appear which would prepare young people for manufacturing. Also much needed are broader possibilities for life-long learning, originally an EU principle. The raising of qualifications and changing of professions based on demand should lessen the flow of emigration.

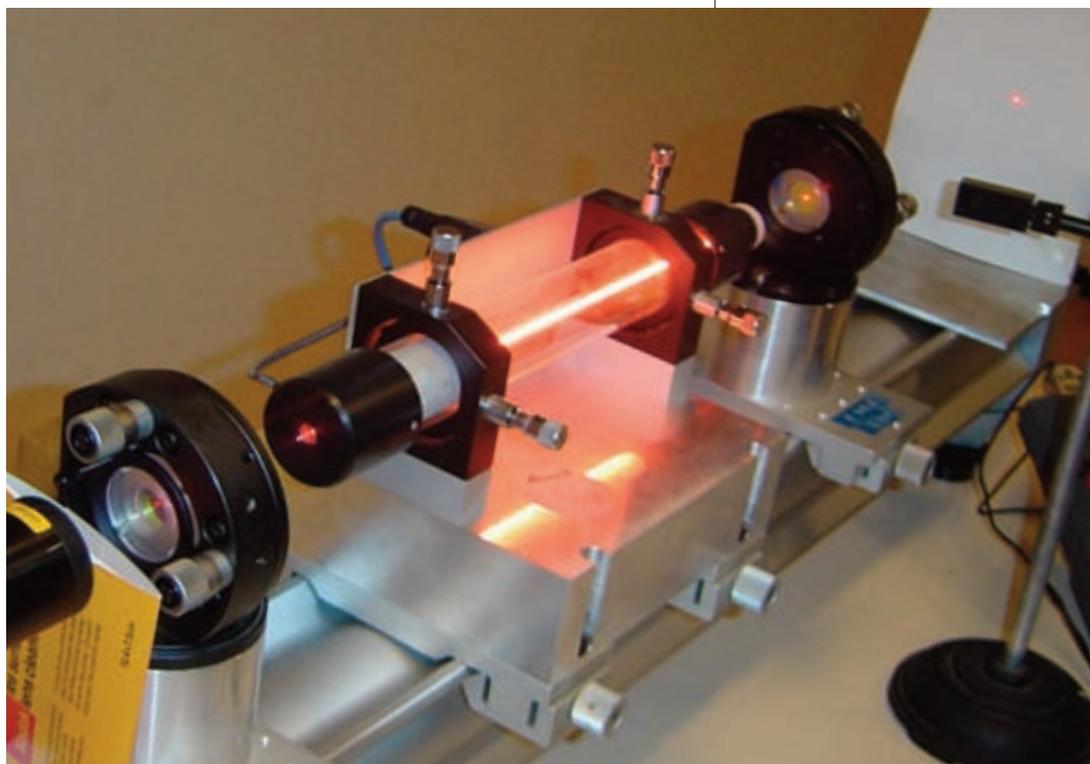
Lithuanian funding for scientific research in the public sector, with 1.5% of GDP allocated for this purpose, is in line with other new EU countries. Unfortunately, private business scrapes far too little together for it, allocating only 0.5% of GDP.

Earlier, scientific research was most often carried out in institutes of the Academy of Sciences and engineering offices of large manufacturers. With most manufacturers gone bankrupt and weakened institutes, this has moved to a few universities.

How can one join together the public with private sector funding as well as applied with basic research? In Lithuania, a decision was made to establish 5 large



*Laser ray test. Laser technology is one of the fields where Lithuanian science has occupied a strong international position*





scientific centres (or valleys) in Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda. The purpose of science, business, studies and technology valleys is to group Lithuanian universities and institutes according to their scientific branches and graft onto them companies and firms which work in the same field. Such prospective science and technological fields like lasers, nanotechnology, semiconductor physics, biotechnology, medical technology, molecular medicine, ecosystems, information technology and communications, agro-biotechnology, biological energetics, chemistry and bio-pharmacy, mechatronics and electronics, future energetics, marine environmental research, marine technology and other fields should flourish even more in the valleys. There are plans to allocate approximately 500 million Euros to the construction and equipment of the valleys. Even more funding for the valleys will come from the EU Structural Funds.

The main scientific and higher technology potential is located in two of the biggest cities in Lithuania. Vilnius and Kaunas are only 90 km away from one another and are joined together by a very good motorway and railroad, which is why the idea naturally arises of a twin-city. The municipalities of both cities are forming an urban centre of European significance in Lithuania, the biggest in the Baltic countries in terms of the number of inhabitants (approximately 1 million) and in terms of manufacturing, scientific, cultural and sports potential. It is with this that the country's international competitiveness is encouraged.

Actually, Vilnius became the first city from the new EU countries which was given the status of a European Capital of Culture, received for 2009. Though Kaunas was not officially nominated, a number of artists from Kaunas and inhabitants of the city will use the advantages provided by the crowning of Vilnius as culture capital.

## Challenges and Limitations of Czech Science and Research



### Libor Roucek

The notions innovation and competitiveness have become almost synonyms for many Europeans over the last years. What are the origins of this conjunction between science and research on one side and economic potential of our countries on the other? The main reason is often identified with the challenges of globalisation. Trade liberalisation under the WTO has opened the market of the European Union to products from countries with cheaper workforce. It has resulted in increasing pressure on the European labour market. The way out, however, is not in decline of wages and social standards in Europe. This can never be accepted as a sustainable solution, though many interest groups and political forces would prefer such an easy answer to challenges of globalization. They call for weakening or even dismantling of the European Social Model and the commitments of the European Union to social market economy. Nonetheless, the recent financial crisis has shown us where "casino" capitalism can lead. Yet the question stands how EU's Member States can maintain the welfare state and remain competitive at the same time. Hence the answer which attributes the key role to research and innovations.

The European Union cannot compete in the global competition with cheap labour but with new ideas, quality research and development of advanced technologies and products. We need to face the implications of trade liberalisation by creating inclusive knowledge society which is the main commitment of the Lisbon strategy. However the strategy has been frequently criticised from many directions for lack of delivery when it comes to innovation and increase in competitiveness. And the EU is very often accused of being incapable of improving the poor situation in this field.

Although the European Institutions bear part of the responsibility, it is lack of action on the part of Member



States that has resulted in slow implementation of the Lisbon Strategy. There are only two countries in Europe where research and development expenditures, as a percentage of GDP, are higher than that of Japan or the United States. Not surprisingly, both are Nordic states where competitiveness is well balanced with social standards. These two states are Sweden and Finland, which stand on the top of countries listed according to investment in science. The bottom of the list occupies mostly new Member States where a lot still need to be done to promote research activities.

There are three main areas where Czech research falls short of the standards in the most competitive economies.

The first is the volume of finances, both from public and private sector, available for scientific community. Although the R&D investments in the Czech Republic have increased in the past years, the level is still below EU average. The current figure is around 1.5 percent of GDP which is less than half of what Sweden or Finland (or Japan) spend in this important segment of their economy. In addition, the business involvement in R&D is relatively low. Enterprises represent only half of the expenditure which is substantially lower than required. The fact is, that these are mainly local companies which are hesitant to invest more in development. On the contrary many foreign investors and multinational enterprises have made the best of relatively high numbers of qualified and well-motivated scientists. Almost 80 percent of foreign companies support science in the Czech Republic. Either they have created their development departments, or have come in cooperation with Czech institutions on specific projects. Meanwhile local companies rely mostly on imported technologies and don't want to run the risk of wrong investment. This process is further exacerbated by the lack of activities by the relevant authorities. The Ministry of Industry and Trade and CzechInvest, the agency responsible for support of investments in the Czech Republic, became less active in support of Czech companies after 2006 general elections.

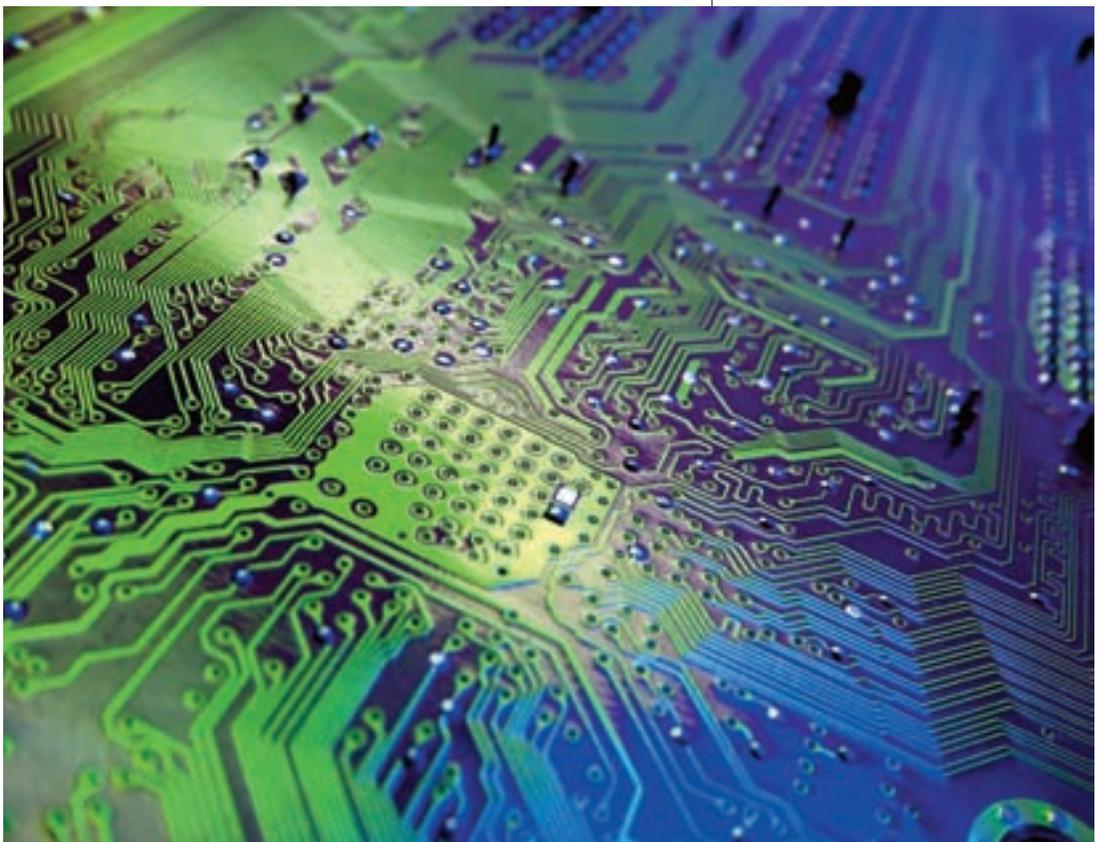
Furthermore, the systems which channel finances in the state budget intended to develop Czech science are significantly fractionised. Almost every ministry has programmes supporting sector specific research. At the end

there are 22 institutions responsible for funding R&D at the government level. Although new documents adopted recently by the government, the National Innovation Policy and the National Research and Development Policy, envisage possibility of reducing the number, it would be worth considering the establishment of a Ministry of Science and Research, or agency similar to U.S. National Science Foundation. This would facilitate the work of scientists who would like to apply for funds and scholarships. At the same time scientists would spend more time on research and less on administration.

Nonetheless the amount of funding is not the only difficulty Czech science has to face. The problems have been running much deeper according to many experts. But it does not concern only experts. "The whole scientific community carry out research on issues for which there is no interest in the world. And there is no attention to issues which would be of interest. The science waste which the



*Research and Development is the response to the challenges of global competition.*





state budget lack." These were the words of former president Václav Havel, who drew public attention to the problem already at the beginning of 1990s. And the situation has not changed much since then.

Here I come to the second area where Czech science faces difficulties. The major challenge is, indeed, how to connect the research with needs of business sector. The Czech scientific community falls behind performances of their colleagues in the United States, Nordic countries or even some emerging economies such as Singapore. In particular there are still deficiencies in the process of developing practical applications from the results of scientific research. This can be demonstrated on the number of patents registered and patent applications filed. The Czech Republic has registered only 41 patents with the most renowned patent institute in the world - the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) - in 2007. It is only a fraction of what countries of relatively same size have managed over the same period of time. For example, Belgium has registered 624 innovations and Sweden has performed actually much better with 1278 patents. Even much smaller Singapore has more than ten times more (451) patents registered in USPTO.

The above mentioned numbers illustrate that Czech research falls down in international comparison of practical results. It reflects the need for reform of the methods of scientific assesment. The evaluation of the quality of scientist's work is usually based on number of articles in "impacted" journals. Although the Czech researchers fall behind European level even in this criterion, there are other practical issues which should be taken into account. This should contain obviously the number of patents, or assesment of projects with practical conclusions.

Lastly, the difficult situation of Czech science is further exacerbated by the generation gap and low attractiveness of science for young generation. These interlinked phenomenons will certainly influence the future development of research capacities in the Czech Republic. The working conditions in academic and research institutes make a scientific career less attractive for young people who rather look for opportunities in the private sector. Therefore many talented young people leave universities

after graduating instead of continuing with postgraduate, PhD, studies. Furthermore, there is of generally accepted perception that science does not provide any interesting work and excitement for young people.

Even if some students decide to dedicate themselves to research, it does not necessarily mean that they will contribute to the amelioration of the situation. Very often young scientists leave to work for foreign R&D institutes after having some experience. And the low wages are not the only reason. The fact that you can work for a prestigious institution and that you have a much better career perspectives abroad are of utmost importance too.

Nonetheless there is still some hope that the situation will get better in coming years. And the incentives of the European Union would play, indeed, a significant role in enforcing and implementing further reforms in this field. The Lisbon Strategy already pushes for additional effort to be done in order to make our society innovative and in consequence more competitive in global terms. Almost everyone is aware of the fact that there is no better alternative to the knowledge society based on quality science and on research and development. The European structural funds will certainly be another important factor making reforms and new initiatives smoother. They will provide additional resources which will improve the financial situation of R&D in the Czech Republic. And other sources of funding that could be used come from the European Union too. These are especially the 7th Framework Programme and the European Research Council. However the final decision about the future of science will have to be done by the government of the Czech Republic. It is not a sustainable, long-term option to become the "fitting-shop" of the European Union. Instead the way of excellence and knowledge should be followed. Otherwise there will never be another world-known scientist such as Otto Wichterle or Jaroslav Heyrovský, the only Czech Nobel Price Laureate for science.





## 5. How to cope with "e" and "i" migration

### Hungarians Around the World?

#### Edit Herczog

An anecdote in the United States says that Adolf Zukor, the founder of Paramount studios wrote a note on his door saying: "To be Hungarian is not enough". About half a million people left Hungary between the two World Wars and following the unsuccessful Hungarian revolution in 1956. They proved to be creative and talented and we were proud of the success stories and the influence of Hungarian emigrants in Hollywood.

Hungarians still like to define themselves as buoyant, creative adventurers. However, this activity, cheer, and innovative spirit seems to vanish through the years.

Statistics show that today Hungarians prefer to stay at home. They do not like change. They do not move, not even within the borders of Hungary. Even if an unemployed is offered a job 200 kilometres away, even if the working conditions are better there, he calculates the risks of selling the house, leaving friends, relatives behind, children leaving school and stays. This attitude is so strong, that Hungarians can not fill up the disposable migration quotas in Member States where working restrictions still exist: in 2006 when Greece decided to open its labour market for the employees from the new Member States, fewer than 50 Hungarian employees were concerned.

In this new century, I think there are three types of Hungarians who might decide in favour of the great adventure: the ones in great despair, the highly qualified or the very curious ones.

The emigration of the very poor and helpless is a sad, sometimes tragic process. The behaviour of the Hungarian public is ambivalent: most try to ignore the phenomenon, then sometimes an event breaks into the daily press and enforces wide attention and heavy disputes. The best

known of such events were two Roma exoduses from the same town, Mohács, where whole families packed their suitcases, sold their property and left the country in the hope of a better life. In 2001 the first wave of the exodus aimed at Canada and resulted in Canada re-imposing a visa requirement for travellers coming from Hungary. In 2006 those families who stayed at home were sent tickets to fly to Sweden. Most of them decided to come back on their own volition within months because of not having any opportunity to get a permit of residence or work. On the whole, a lot of people leave Hungary hopeless and rootless without having any command of language or profession. It is a great moral obligation of Hungary to call back and integrate these people by giving them new perspectives.

The migration of the highly qualified workforce seems to be unstoppable. This migration is mostly independent from the accession to the EU and from the opening of western European labour markets – though they accelerated it. These emigrants are mostly extremely well qualified:



*The national holidays are the most precious added values of the European Union*





medical doctors, engineers, researchers, university teachers and professors belong to this group. Their main motivation to move abroad is the better salary, though it is not a purely financial matter: the possibility of professional development, the repulsive political situation and institutional circumstances, the incalculable financial and structural changes, are all decisive factors. Most of these experts are content with their lives in their chosen country, so half of them settle down without wanting to come home ever again. The other half who plan to move back, think in medium-terms and fancy their life abroad five-ten years later again.

This emigration has already a great impact on small town medical services: the list of unfilled jobs for nurses, medical doctors grows every year. The poor working conditions are among the main reasons of migration: a specialist with competitive language skills can earn a multiple of his salary abroad.

Curious and adventurous young people see emigration as the deep well of possibilities: as university students or fresh entrants seek exercise, knowledge, language abilities while using their new qualification. They can grow up abroad and arrive back as well-prepared, confident adults. One of the biggest challenges for a young Hungarian is to buy their first flat, to build the framework of a self-supporting life. With some years spent abroad, a talented person can secure their position in the Hungarian labour market and accumulate capital that allows them to buy their own flat in Hungary.

My personal suspicion is that the above trends will not change in the near future. Only four out of ten people speak any foreign languages. Our educational characteristics show that quality language teaching correlates with higher education. Therefore, the Hungarian plumber will not threaten the position of his Polish colleague: his lack in communication skills holds him back from participation in the internal labour and services market.

## Why we Dislike Pirezians?

**Edit Herczog**

Many people might think that Hungary is an uncomfortable place to start a new life: the life quality is clearly higher if you visit our western neighbours, there is no supporting diaspora and the official language is strange and difficult. In every year only about one hundred people are declared as refugees here, so most of the Hungarians have never met a refugee in their life. The proportion of foreigners is constantly low. The immigrants are younger than the here-born Hungarians and their education is higher than the Hungarian average. We should be glad that they are here. Why are we not then?

A survey from 2007 proves that more than one third of the Hungarian population is openly xenophobe. Three out of ten people would refuse every request for asylum no matter where the refugees come from or why. Only 6 percent of the Hungarians are considered supportive. All the others hesitate to answer – but technically they welcome nobody else but the immigrants with Hungarian origin from the neighbouring countries: not even "Pirezians". "Pirezian" is a fictive ethnical group invented by the researchers. This category is in good use for analyzing the mechanisms of xenophobia: seven out of ten Hungarians are of the opinion that Hungary should not host immigrants from that imaginary "Pirezia". The distaste against Pirezians grows fast: in 2006 the rejection was 9% higher.

In the 20th century migrants avoided Hungary and other countries of the area – with some exceptions from Greece. (A group of Greek resistants arrived in 1976. They formed a small Greek town called Beloiannis. The town succeeded to remain what it was: a strange and lovely Greek 'island' in Hungary). It was only in the early eighties when Hungary met the phenomena of immigration, let's say: suddenly and unprepared.

Most migrants arrive to Hungary from the neighbouring countries. The first big wave of immigration was at the end





of the eighties and concerned mostly Romanian citizens with Hungarian ethnicity from Transylvania. Hungary was also attractive for Russian soldiers: when in 1991 the Russian army prepared to leave the territory of Hungary, it suddenly raised the wedding-spirit among soldiers. Some Hungarians earned good money by "falling in love" with a handsome Russian officer – at least on paper. A woman in my home village married and divorced five times within a few years. Her last husband was the first one, the four other in between were Russians. In the meantime, her original husband also married four Russian women. This was a win-win step, as the eight Russians got the Hungarian nationality this way, and the Hungarian couple earned a lot of money. At the end, they owned a lovely, big, new house. The next wave of immigrants arrived at the time of the war in the territory of the ex-Yugoslavia and raised the number of refugees. These refugees did not plan to stay and indeed, and most of them left the country after the Kosovo crisis ended.

The proportion of new arrivals from the further parts of the world is insignificant, though there are at least 50 countries (Nigeria, Iran, Iraq, Cuba, among others), from where the migrants originate. Most of them are not refugees. The typical foreign migrant arrived as student, married a Hungarian and stayed. The only bigger immigrant group from outside Europe is the Chinese. Their community arrived to Hungary in the early nineties and integrated without noisy conflicts.

Henceforward, the majority of the immigrants is of Hungarian ethnic origin. Most of them are young adults, though secondary immigration appeared already (when ageing parents over 60 follow their children).

Immigrants from the neighbouring countries integrate fast and successfully. They find their place in the labour market and integrate themselves into economy and society without too many problems. It is understandable, if we consider that these young people are mostly well-qualified, they already speak the language and are aware of the culture which gives them a symbolic advantage. They mostly possess the necessary personal and labour connections before their arrival to the country.

Immigration of Hungarians became a self-supporting

process as the immigrants are followed by friends and family members. More than 90% of the immigrants from the neighbour countries are of Hungarian ethnic origin. In the short run these newcomers help to stabilize our labour market and to create a balance for our ageing population but numbers show that inviting such a big proportion of the concerned minorities we amend the proportion of Hungarians in an unfavourable way: the Hungarian minority in Ukraine and in the ex-Yugoslavian states will fall radically. Even Romania will be seriously affected as about half a million people leave Romania within 25 years. Most immigrants arrive from small town areas, but also villages are more and more affected every year. About 70 % of Hungarians arrive from places where only or mostly Hungarians lived before – it amends the ethnic mix of these areas seriously and in the long run endangers the future of these communities.

Hungarians were the last nationality to arrive in the Carpathians more than thousand years ago. We were not warmly welcomed – just as most immigrants are not. After so many years we should try to re-discover some parts of our history and learn some values from our own past. Probably, we would find some answers to of our questions and doubts regarding migrants.





## **Finnish Emigration Has Slumped – Brain Drain Increasing**

**Riitta Myller**

The Finns have busily emigrated to different parts of the world in the course of time. Without emigration our population would be approximately seven million instead of the current 5.3 million.

North America, the United States in particular was the main destination of emigration before the Second World War. Between the end of the 19th century and the 1930s almost 400,000 Finns migrated to America, some looking for work, some digging for gold in the hope of getting rich and others for adventure. It is estimated that approximately 150,000 Finns moved to Russia before Finland gained independence. Some Finns also migrated to the Soviet Union during the first few decades after its birth. The

*Somailian girls at Helsinki*



emigrants had strong political aspirations. They went to build the ideal state.

Another noticeable period in emigration began in the 1950s continuing until the beginning of the 1970s, when the baby boomers born after the Second World War reached working age. Hundreds of thousands of Finns migrated to Sweden, the most significant destination for migration. Between 1969 and 1970 emigration was so intense that our population actually decreased. The reason for emigration was the transformation of the Finnish society from an agrarian into industrial. The transformation was slow when compared to Sweden and the labour force freed from farming, especially in the Eastern parts of the country, thus migrated to Sweden. Swedish industry was already extensively automated and able to employ the immigrants, who for the most part had no language skills.

However since 1980 more people moved to Finland than left the country. Nowadays approximately 10,000 Finns emigrate annually. Contrary to the past, majority of the emigrants are highly educated. The motives for emigration mostly vary between career development, studying, the improvement of language skills, willingness to get new life experience or having a relationship abroad; the improvement of living standards is not the main motive. Most emigrants move to another EU country. In rough terms, the highly educated move to France, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland. Main destinations for the less educated are Sweden and Estonia, whereas the pensioners move to Spain.

The emigration of the highly educated and vocational degree holders has increased remarkably since Finland joined the EU. Every year a couple of hundred more highly educated people leave Finland than arrive in here. The net result of brain circulation is negative despite the overall net gain in migration. The relation between the science and technology professionals who have emigrated from Finland and the immigrants who work in Finland, the 'brain balance' in other words, was the third weakest in the OECD countries in 2001, with only Mexico and Poland falling behind. Of all the skilled foreign professionals working in the OECD countries, approximately 1 % is Finnish. In comparison, only 1 in a million of all the skilled





professionals of other OECD countries worked in Finland.

The brain drain from Finland varies depending on the sector of the economy. Medicine and natural sciences are the most affected. However, brain drain is not yet considered to be a significant problem in Finland. The most debated topic is the emigration of health and social care professionals. The sector is once again experiencing a severe labour shortage. 4-5% of Finnish nurses work abroad, especially in Sweden, Norway and Great Britain. They moved to these countries because of better salary levels and because of unemployed after the depression in the beginning of the 1990s. Efforts have been taken to get them back; during the last salary negotiation round the nurses' salaries were raised more than those of other workers. It is, however, no longer enough to lure back the Finnish nurses; the recruiting of nurses is taking place as far away as the Philippines.

Even if brain drain is not yet a hotly debated topic in Finland, it may become one in the near future. In a survey by a widely circulated youth newspaper, the readers were asked to evaluate what will be the biggest disaster Finland is to face in 2010: brain drain was number two, after the regional inequality.

## Greying Finland Learning the Basics of Internationalisation



### Riitta Myller

In 2007 Finland hit a new immigration record. More people migrated to Finland than ever before during our independence: 26,050. The overall net gain in migration was 13,600, of which the share of the EU countries was 4,400. Immigration from other EU countries has constantly increased since 1997, whereas emigration from Finland to other EU countries has remained at the same level during the last few years. 132,600 immigrants lived in Finland in 2007, of whom 47,000 were citizens of another EU country. The share of immigrants in the population has increased fivefold in 10 years. Despite this, the share of immigrants is still the lowest in the EU, at approximately 2.5%.

Ahead of the Eastern European enlargement of the EU the Finns feared a massive influx of immigrants from the





Baltic States and Poland. In the spring of 1998 the European Commission and Finnish trade union confederations funded a survey in which it was estimated that the EU membership of Estonia and Poland would annually bring approximately 20,000-25,000 immigrants to Finland. The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions carried out a similar survey in Estonia a couple of years later. This time the figures were many times higher; it was discovered that as many as 400,000 Estonians (one out of three) believed they would be able to work in Finland and one out of ten believed they would stay in the country for a longer time.

Majority of the Finns were exceedingly reserved about the Eastern enlargement, as they feared the influx of workers. Finland applied a two-year transitional period for the free movement of workers. The previous forecasts and surveys that had raised fear soon turned out to have no actual basis. Currently there are 20,000 Estonians living in Finland and most of them already lived in our country before Estonia's EU membership. Contrary to the predictions, the Poles have not immigrated to Finland either; there are fewer than 1,500 Poles living in the country.

The biggest immigrant group in Finland is the Russians with 26,200. The Swedes are third, after the Estonians, with 8,400 of them in the country. There are 4,800 Somalis and nearly 4,000 Chinese in Finland. Then there are Germans, the Thais, the Turkish, the British and the Iraqis with over 3,000 immigrants in each group. The figures do not include those who have taken up the Finnish nationality or a double nationality. For instance, 8,000 speak Somali and 45,000 Russian as their mother tongue. Those with an immigrant background mainly live in the Helsinki metropolitan area.

In the beginning of the 1990s the immigrants' share of the population was only 1%. However, during the 1990s Finland received a record amount of asylum seekers and Ingrian Finn repatriates coming from Russia and Estonia. As Finland was concurrently struggling with a serious economic depression, the immigrants were viewed with suspicion. The Finns have clearly become more tolerant of the immigrants during the last 10 years. In a survey carried out in 2007 the Finns were found to be more tolerant of

foreign job seekers than ever previously recorded in a survey. The attitudes have softened in all age, gender, educational and occupational groups. It was found that the more one knew immigrants personally, the more tolerant one is towards them.

Finland being the fastest ageing country in the world, a change in attitudes is required; the immigrants are needed owing to the constantly worsening shortage of workforce. However, in a survey about attitudes by the Finnish Business and Policy Forum EVA, a think tank, it was discovered that only slightly more than one third of the population (35%) accepted immigration as a solution to the problems posed by an ageing population. Year by year the attitudes have softened; 10 years ago only 19% of the Finns supported immigration.

Those who take a stand against immigration normally argue that the immigrants who are already in the country should be employed first. It is evident that Finland has not been able to utilise the immigrants' skills; the unemployment rate of immigrants is 2.5 times higher than that of the Finns.

In the 1990s less than 30% of the Finns accepted the view that the immigrants working in Finland bring beneficial international influences in the country. A couple years ago almost half of the population agreed with the view. Those with reservations towards immigrants (52% of the population) do not consider themselves racist or ignorant; they argue for 'sensible carefulness'.

All in all, xenophobia has not been present in Finnish election campaigns or party programmes until very recently. Only a single party in Finland, True Finns, campaigns with a somewhat xenophobic programme and they have been attracting supporters with anti-foreigner views. The same party also opposes Finland's EU membership. In the parliamentary elections of 2007 True Finns share of votes was 4,1%. Following year in the municipal elections their share of votes rose to 5,4% and a official poll result from January 2009 showed 8, 3 % support to the True Finns. The only somewhat xenophobic and certainly most nationalistic party in Finland has is unfortunately no longer a minor party but a medium-sized party.





## **A More Lithuanian Lithuania or Higher Standards of Living?**

**Justas Paleckis**

In sessions of the European Parliament I have heard the following comparison: EU countries take in one million immigrants a year, while the US takes in three million. This difference partially explains why America is leading the pack in the world economy. The EU could compete with the US more successfully, if it would take in at least two million newcomers each year.

There is still no united immigration policy in the EU. However, the European Commission has offered to practice a method of circular migration in the cooperation strategy they have put forward: migrants with higher qualifications could work in an EU country for a year or two and then go to another or return to their home country, able to move back and forth within this circle. There are plans to harmonize the penalties for employers who exploit migrants. Brussels is inclined to negotiate with countries where the most migrants to the EU come from, for better information about legal work in the EU, language and other forms of learning.

Lithuania is just starting to experience a shortage of labour, which Western Europe already dealt with fifty years ago. Having overcome the shortages of the post-war years, there was a deficiency of labour in countries such as the economic miracle Germany and its neighbouring countries. Locals did not want to work in low-skilled, more difficult poorly-paid jobs, and so, encouraged foreigners to come and work. At the time the term “gastarbeiter” was coined, which means “guest workers”. They came from Italy, Spain, Portugal, Yugoslavia and Turkey. Almost all migrants from the latter two countries are visiting their home countries to this day, whereas from the former, many returned when the standards of living rose at the countries of origin, especially when Spain and Portugal joined the EU.

Gastarbeiters helped the 'host' countries to create a more

favourable economic conjuncture and higher standards of living. The *gastarbeiters* also brought with them many problems; a few of them avoided integrating into a local society that was hostile towards the newcomers. Swiss writer Max Frisch at the time coined a famous phrase: “We wanted a labour force, but human beings came.”

People - the human beings - are already coming to Lithuania (most often from neighbouring countries) where there is already a lack of labour.

Six years ago I flipped through a demographic forecast by the United Nations for the Baltic countries. A few different possibilities were provided. The most pessimistic of these was simply depressing: according to it, in 2050 the local inhabitants will make up less than 50 % of the population in all three countries! Could what didn't happen during the Soviet period become reality in this globalised world? The UN document forecast that among the newcomers, the Slavs will be dominating, however, not Asians and Africans for whom the traditions, climate and language are foreign.

Back when mass emigration had not yet gained momentum, this seemed unbelievable. And now we want to push away this forecast of the “worst case scenario” and do everything so it would be disproved. But a bitter dilemma arises: do we want Lithuania just for Lithuanians and those who have been living here since time immemorable, or a competitive economy and higher standards of living?

Not long ago I posed this question on my website. Most supported the first option. On the other hand, according to a representative survey, 46 % of Lithuanians would not be against foreigners of non-Lithuanian descent who would come to our country having the possibility of receiving Lithuanian citizenship, while also remaining citizens of their home country.

It is important that newcomers do not feel like outsiders, so they could integrate into our lives. Those who plan to lay down roots here should learn Lithuanian as quickly as possible. They need courses at a reduced fee and special conditions for their children. Up till now most specialists with rarer professions (for example, ship body welders) come from Ukraine, Belarus and also from Romania and Bulgaria. Before the 2008 crisis a number of construction





*Lithuania for Lithuanians  
or a competitive economy and  
higher standards of living*

workers from Lithuania went to the UK and Ireland, which is why there was a lack of labour and a constant rise in salaries in a sector which experienced a boom. A highly qualified construction worker was able to earn € 1,500 to € 2,000 a month, while it was possible for a hard-working beginner to get € 1,000. Such salaries are already attractive for foreigners from countries that are farther away.

Lithuanians, who just a short time ago rarely had the chance to see non-European faces on our streets, are not yet tolerant towards newcomers from other continents. This goes against the tradition of old EU members and our common values, harming us all along the way. We will have to get used to not being surprised and act accordingly if we are soon to start hearing Chinese not only in restaurant kitchens, but on construction sites.

We will have to agree on answers to very complicated challenges: how to lessen the emigration of Lithuanian citizens; how to encourage economic growth with a small number of newcomers; and how to integrate those who stay for a longer period. In a global world we will not be able to put up walls, but we will need to learn from the experience of others and improve ourselves as quickly as we can.



## **The Czech Republic and Immigration: Rediscovered Opportunity**



### **Libor Roucek**

For hundreds of years, migration has been perceived in Europe as natural expression of people's desire for a better life. Since time immemorial our predecessors moved to find better livelihood either in form of more fertile land or by absence of political or religious oppression. Indeed emigration has always been the ultimate solution, very often, moving to different country or even to distant regions has served as an only way to escape famine, poverty, persecution or war. The faith of finding Canaan has made millions of people leave their native soil. Therefore Europe has experienced permanent movement of men and women since the very beginning of human civilization. The Czech lands, situated in the heart of Europe, weren't any exemption. In the modern times they have been mostly source of emigrants leaving for political as well as economic reasons. Turbulent historical events resulted in many waves of exile starting with Protestants leaving the country in 16th and 17th century and ending with thousands of people who fled the communist Czechoslovakia before 1989.

However the Czech lands have been very often the destination of people looking for new life too. In the early medieval times thousands of Germans were invited and welcomed in sparsely populated border regions. Local rulers warmly received them because of need for labour and the more advanced technologies they brought with them. They contributed to economic and social development of the medieval Czech kingdom which became a rich and prosperous country in 14th and 15th century. It made other people from all around Europe to look for their fortune there. Later on, many men and women chased for their faith found shelter in the Czech lands where religious freedom was ensured until the Thirty Years War. Indeed, the influx of aliens wasn't always welcomed by local population due to different habits,



tradition and language of newcomers. Nevertheless the fact that people coming to the Czech lands were free to settle there prove that migration was accepted not only by migrants themselves but even by the receiving country and its sovereigns. For hundreds of years local rulers had perceived immigration as a positive cultural, social and especially economic phenomenon. Foreigners settling down represented a needed labour force in agriculture or were skilful craftsmen who brought new technologies, experiences and knowledge. Although some people in my country, the Czech Republic, don't like to hear it, the Germans who colonised border regions contributed to expansion of crafts and later on to development of manufacturing. They also mediated contacts to more advanced regions in the West where new cultural trends and influences came from.

The historical experience of Czech lands is not unique or exceptional in Europe. Most European countries had been opened to immigration because of its benefits until the beginning of 20th century when first restrictions on influx of foreigners were introduced. This fact can seem rather bizarre, having in mind uneasiness and discomfort of our citizens provoked by a current increase of immigrants coming to Europe. Even more peculiar can be the information that a lot of European countries used to have restrictions on emigration and not on immigration. Indeed context has significantly changed when it comes to migratory flows and their perception by local populations that can explain changing approach to aliens. First migration became increasingly globalized after 2nd World War when Europe turned out to be a destination for immigrants rather than the source of emigrants as it had been during 18th and 19th century. Now people from Africa or Asia are coming to our countries with more different values and traditions than immigrants from other parts of Europe. At the same time aliens are no more seen as contributors to economic and social development of our countries. As Andrzej Bolesta in his article in *Current Politics and Economics of Europe* notes, nowadays they are perceived "in the first place as financial burden on the state and its taxpayers".

Although the Czech Republic has been rather source of

emigrants during hundreds of years, the situation has significantly changed in the last decade which makes the attitude to immigrants very similar to the one of Western Europeans. The Czech Republic became rather a country of immigration due to several economic and social reasons. Nonetheless, the most important factors have been the job and business opportunities for foreigners during the decade of strong economic growth started in 1998. This has caused steep increase of number of immigrants in last two decades from 35 000 in 1989 to more than 400 000 foreigners with long term or permanent residence in the Czech Republic. Indeed, tenfold growth presents psychological challenge for population which hasn't been used to different cultures and traditions and which has been curtailed from the rest of the world for more than 40 years of Communist regime. Nonetheless this doesn't justify any acts of hostility to foreigners perpetrated by extremist or populist movements within our society. On the contrary we should explain to our citizens that immigration represents both opportunity



*Monitoring elections  
in Azerbaijan,  
one of key future supplier of  
oil and gaz to Europe*





and need for our country. The ageing population and economic growth require the influx of foreigner workers. An example can be found in automotive industry whose expansion created thousands of new jobs. The rising demand for qualified and semi-qualified workers cannot be sufficiently satisfied by domestic "supply of labour force" and has to be met by employing foreigners. That's why qualified Slovaks, Ukrainians and even Vietnamese or Mongolians are all welcomed and why the Czech economy benefits from their work. Therefore immigration has become part of the solution to demographic and economic challenges rather than part of the problem.

The Czech Republic has rediscovered benefits of immigration in the last eighteen years. Although many would argue with this fact, the current immigration wave has proved to be advantageous to my country as was the arrival of German people to border regions during medieval times. Indeed Slovaks, Ukrainians, Vietnamese and others are contributing to our prosperity in different ways than Germans contributed to development of the Czech lands hundreds of years ago. However, foreigners have always been important factor which has made our country richer, both economically and culturally. Therefore we shouldn't listen to voices calling for more restrictive policies on migration and even on free movement within the European Union. The "Fortress Europe" is not the right solution for our problems with migration in particularly in age of globalization. History shows us that we cannot prevent people from escaping from misery and persecution and from looking for better life in our countries. What we can do is to use migration for the benefit of our societies. The Czech Republic has managed to do so and I'm convinced that the European Union can do the same.

## Competing with Time

### Katrin Saks

Maria is a slim blonde with long braids. She lives in the Upper-Suetuki village in Siberia. About six generations back, her great-grandparents moved there from Estonia in the hope for a free piece of fertile land that the emigrants had been promised. Together with other Estonians they established their own village. It is still widely known as “the Estonian village”, having later been replenished first by Tsarist, then by Soviet deportees.

Maria’s grandmother taught her about their motherland. Maria learned to speak Estonian and listened to stories about this fantastic far-away land. This summer she travelled to Estonia with other youngsters from her village. They took part in a summer camp, organised for Estonians from all over the world.

When I asked, what had been the most surprising or



*Let's sign some books! Both me and the President Toomas Hendrik Ilves contributed to this collection of essays for Estonia 90th Anniversary*





astonishing impression for them, almost everyone said: “the fact that Estonia actually still existed”. For the Siberian Estonians, it had been a sort of a fairy tale, passed on from generation to generation – a fairy tale land that they now discovered to be real. It turned out to be a wonderful place, where oddly enough, people speak ‘that’ language which, until now, had seemed a ‘pixie tongue’.

The fact that there are only about a million Estonian speakers leads us to seek out our long-lost kin and to hope for their return. The reasons for organising such summer camps is not just to introduce these young people to their roots, but also to encourage them to come and study in Estonia. Some are already doing just that.

\*

I also visited Canada, a land that welcomed tens of thousands of Estonians after World War II. I attended a local Estonian-Canadian community event. There was even a parade and an orchestra, and three generations of Estonians marching hand in hand. There were speeches about spring and flowers blooming in the Estonian forests. I saw tears in the eyes of some older people. The younger people did not quite seem to have the same depth of feeling – what was the crying all about? The language is being forgotten much sooner in Canada than in Siberia.

After the re-establishment of independence, the Estonians were expecting younger exiles to relocate in Estonia. A lot of time has passed, and few have returned to the land of their ancestors. Living standards were lower, support networks would need expanding, and new friendships forging. A return would have required some support mechanisms and solutions that Estonia was, at the time, unable to offer. However, there were people who made the move – take the now-president Toomas Hendrik Ilves.

A greater number of people came from the Lake Peipsi area, which used to belong to Estonia before the Soviet occupation, but is now part of Russia. After Estonia regained independence the movement accelerated. Estonia established a National Migration Fund that has helped people to relocate. Among the first were the Estonians from

the war-torn Abkhaz villages in Georgia. Altogether their remains about 220 000 fellow Estonians outside Estonia.

Today, the fund has more money than before, but fewer people seek help. About 50 people per year request support for moving from Russia to Estonia. These people are advised about employment opportunities. They receive the one-time equivalent of about three months' salary per person. Yet a bigger issue looms. How do we attract here those people who left Estonia to seek a better life in the West? That figure stands at 20-30,000 people, and according to some specialists may be three times as many.

Many of those who fled Estonia's difficult transition to a market economy, moved to the EU, mainly to the UK. Most still have strong ties with their homeland. Those in Finland or Sweden even often come home on weekends. In fact, the transport connection between Helsinki and Tallinn is much faster and smoother than that between certain regions within Estonia itself. Or, on the other hand, there are doctors who leave Estonia only for weekends, in order to do night shifts at Helsinki hospitals. Many work in the construction, tourism and medical sectors. As Estonian salaries have been higher than elsewhere in the Baltic states, we have suffered less from emigration. But in spite of that, we are competing against time. What is going to increase faster, wages or the number of those who leave?

However, considering how small we are, each person's departure impacts more heavily on the nation than it does in more populous countries. Unemployment is now a much less serious problem than the lack of employees.

What is the solution? Should we try to attract Poles, who used to come and work in Estonia before WWII? Or invite doctors from Russia and construction workers from Ukraine? Today, mainly highly skilled employees have been granted work visas and according to the new law, employers must pay the employees from third countries a salary of at least 1.2 times Estonian average.

Employers, however, wish to employ blue-collar workers as well as specialists. One fourth of Estonian enterprises is either already using immigrant labour or plan to do so in the near future, but the already high number of Estonian residents born outside the country makes the





politicians wary. Up to now the immigration from third countries has been very strictly regulated, and permits are given only to import certain kinds of specialists. The immigration quota was indeed recently enlarged, but it must not be bigger than 0.1% of the population. Public opinion and integration problems (18% of Estonian population were born outside Estonia) speak against that solution. Estonia serves as a good example for Europe in terms of showing that immigration is only a short-term solution. The large waves of people who were brought to Estonia in their best age of employability in the 1960s and 1970s are now massively replenishing the rows of pensioners and contributing to the general ageing of the population. Thus the only solution is to cope with a smaller number. Presently everybody is discussing, how to work “more intelligently” with fewer pairs of hands, but unfortunately the decrease in the population seems to be quicker than the race towards this goal.

## The Europe of Emigrants

### Adrian Severin

The “European dream” of Romanians (and I am sure, the dream of many other peoples) while they were sequestered in the Soviet Camp was about freedom. For many the freedom was, maybe, more important than food or prosperity, and certainly more important than stability or predictability (merits of which were noticed only after their liberation from the communist slavery).

Freedom had many faces: freedom to think without fear; freedom to speak; freedom to express ones faith; freedom to gather and associate; freedom to choose; freedom to travel. Freedom to travel particularly was the most tangible





expression of freedom. For Romanians, whose national myth placed their ethnic origins in Rome – the capital of the Western Roman Empire, travelling abroad was the means to re-establish contacts and solidarity with their cultural family, to enlarge their horizon of knowledge by a direct dialogue with other cultures, to study in places which were consistent with their mentalities and to accede to the resources of a dynamic, just and rich labour market. The former communist regime was hated, among other reasons, for forbidding the free circulation of people.

In spite of that, one must observe that the Romanian society was - and still is to a large extent - rural and therefore a conservative one. Romanians are very much linked to their land and home. Thus they are not much attracted by the idea of emigration, and even if they do emigrate, they see this as a provisional solution only. (The biggest communities of Romanian emigrants are formed by those originated in the country's regions that belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire where they were an ethno-cultural group dominated by alien rulers and where the industrialization in a Western European style began earlier and more vigorously changing in a rather brutal manner their way of living and thinking.) At the same time Romania is a rich country and Romanians, along with a rather complex and complicated history, have learnt the technique of survival by using internal opportunities. They always find ways out inside their familiar universe and emigration is really the last and very distant recourse. This explains perhaps why Romania was always a country of immigration more than a country of emigration.

After the crossing of the real communism desert ended, the Romanians, finally free, entered the real capitalism jungle. There they suffered a multiple shock. The first one was to discover that the exit door, previously locked by the former national dictators, had been fenced off on the other side, precisely by those Western democracies that used to accuse the communist disrespect for the freedom of movement. The second shock was to see that our Western European "liberators" were more interested in Romanian brains and Romanian children (who shamefully the Romanians were unable to take good care of at home) than in Romanians as fellow human beings. This is a terrible

threat not only for the future of Romania as a cultural nation but also for the future of Romania as a human civilization organized on a certain territory. The third shock was to realize that, even when the Western labour markets started to half open for the Romanian labour, this was done in such a way, as to annul their comparative and competitive advantages. The relatively small Romanian labour costs were seen as “social dumping” and not as an opportunity which, if valorised, could lead a Europe in transition affected by noticeable economic and social cleavages, towards its claimed goal of social cohesion. The fourth shock had its source in the totally unexpected cultural (even racial) rejection of Romanians by their kin nations from the EU. Often the Western Europeans describe Romanians as criminals (the socio-cultural prejudice) and gypsies (the racial-cultural prejudice). The accusation that Romania – and especially its Roma population – is the reason for the increasing criminality in Europe is not only unfounded but also vicious, since it aims to transform the country into a kind of a concentration camp for an ethnic community, unwelcome in and by the European “consolidated democracies”. In reality Romanians are no more (and no less) inclined to break the law as any other European people, while the Roma community is not Romanian but a European social and cultural problem which should be addressed in an empathic, coherent and substantial way by all Europeans and not only by Romania which lacks the means to cope alone with it.

The answer to the painful Romanian problems related to emigration lies in the European process. Romanian social cohesion depends on the European capacity and readiness to achieve its economic and territorial cohesion. Only a political Europe is able to reach such a goal within a reasonable time by using a couple of forces represented by the so-called “social dumping” (as a short run transition policy) and structural funds. In a long run, Romania must be supported to keep at home all its brains and children, on whom its future depends, since the future of the EU member states as a group is indivisible: if one state loses its future the whole Union is in trouble.





## The Europe of Immigrants

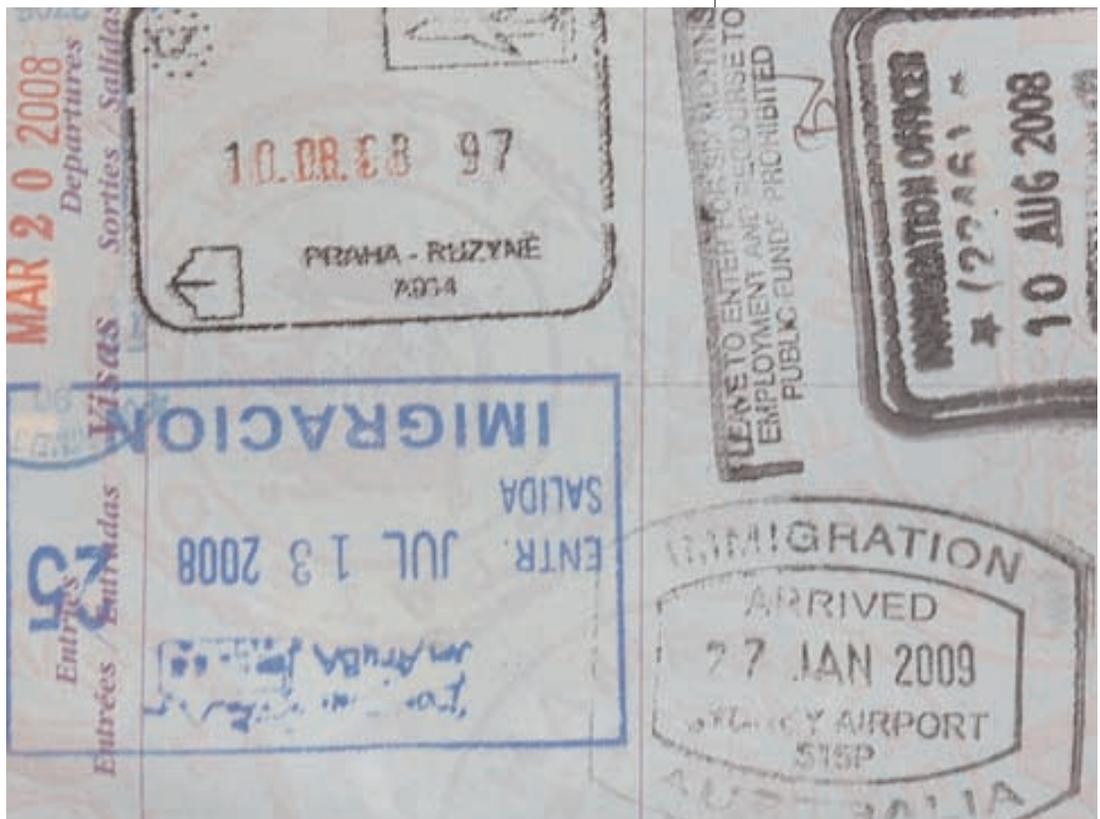
### Adrian Severin

A rich land placed at the crossing point of important commercial and strategic roads, Romania has always been a country of immigration rather than one of emigration. The naturalization of Jews, settled here in big numbers in the Middle Ages, was one of major problems to be solved by the emerging Romanian nation. The recognition of the new Romanian state was postponed until 1881, since the European powers were not satisfied with the Romanian answer to their request concerning the said naturalization. This was still an issue at the Versailles Peace Conference at the end of the First World War. However, in the end the integration of Jews in the Romanian society was so successful that the excellent relations between other Romanians and Jewish population having their origins in Romania survived the awful racial policies of the Romanian authorities allied with Hitler during the Second World War. (Mention should be made that, even if the Holocaust took place on the Romanian territories as well, the treatment of Jews and the implementation of racial regulations were milder than in other places in Europe.) To a certain extent this explains the very special relations between Israel and Romania after the War.

The emancipation and liberation of the Roma (Gypsy) slaves also took place in the 19th century. Their cultural integration remained a challenge until today, generating serious social troubles. Their social marginalization throughout the time, often associated with and being aggravated by their poverty pushed them towards criminal activities. On the other hand, their nomad traditions and way of living has

transformed them into an important (their birth rate is also very high) group of “European travellers”, thus transforming the Roma problem into a European one. After the change of the communist regime, the restored Romanian democracy adopted ambitious programs for Roma integration, but in the absence of appropriate resources and of a consistent European support (this support is mostly rhetorical and tends to see Romania, as well as its neighbours in Central Europe, as a place for the concentration of the Roma population, like in the past centuries was the case with the Jewish communities waiting for their state) the progress is limited. Coping with and overcoming the Romanian (but also European) myths and prejudices about Roma should be a part of this program.

However, neither the Jews nor the Roma are immigrants (in a strictly chronological sense) in





Romania. Together with other ethno-cultural communities settled there during a more ancient past (Hungarians, Germans, Serbs, Poles, Ukrainians, Russians, Slovaks, Greeks, etc.) they were all present on today's Romanian territories when the Romanian nation state was born (i.e. the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century). Therefore they are and they should be considered as fundamental parts of the Romanian modern civic nation and co-founders of the Romanian modern state. Immigrants are only those aliens who arrived and settled in Romania later.

At the end of the international bipolar order and after the collapse of the USSR and of the Soviet block, the immigration to Romania became easier. To open the border for immigrants (i.e. for those who want to reside in Romania and eventually become its citizens) has been perceived as an expression of Romania's regained freedom and respect for freedom.

A more permissive immigration policy was imposed, also as a result of a rather important (at the Romanian scale) rate of emigration – both permanent and temporary. For the first time in its history Romania was confronted with a lack of labour force in some of its most important economic branches. Immigrants coming mostly from Asia filled this gap but they also carried with them – and this is indeed might have been a problem – the features of different cultures – different religions, traditions, behaviours, ways of thinking and living. Fortunately no social confrontations or unrests followed such cultural clashes yet. Romanians, who traditionally rejected the ethno-cultural nationalism while practicing only a geo-political one, proved once more that they have the know-how (being more tolerant in deeds than in words, flexible in law enhancement and egalitarian in mentalities) to integrate (if not even smoothly assimilate) the foreigners.

Accession to the EU imposed serious restrictions

in Romania's immigration policy. Mainly, measures to stop illegal immigration had to be implemented. The difficulty of those anti-immigration policies, and of reaching their demanded effectiveness, are even bigger since Romania is a state placed at the frontier of the EU in the neighbourhood of areas which are major sources of illicit trafficking.

A special problem is raised by the Moldavian "immigrants". Ethnically, those Moldavians who ask for Romanian citizenship are Romanians. (Moldovan is the name for the Oriental Romanians.) Politically they are subjects of a state which was formed as a result of the Soviet occupation (firstly in agreement with Nazi Germany) of Romanian territories. Those Moldavians were deprived (directly or through their ancestors) of their Romanian citizenship against their will. The present democratic Romanian state definitely has a moral obligation – and to a certain extent a legal one – to reconstitute Romanian citizenship to these people, or at least to facilitate their human contacts with their kin Romanian nationals through visa facilitation. On the other hand, it is also true that this raises political problems with the Republic of Moldova – problems which embarrass Brussels – as well as social problems in the EU – since many Moldavians ask for the Romanian citizenship or visas only because they want to become EU citizens and to settle in the Western member states. Many so called Romanian criminals, who create problems in the EU, are in fact Moldavians or even Ukrainians and Russians from the Republic of Moldova who only transit Romania.

This being said, one must observe that, all in all, the EU immigration policy is inadequate. Given the demographic trends in Europe, immigration is very much needed. In the medium term, the growth of the EU and of its relevance at the global level will depend on immigrants. After all, demography





is the mother of history.

Within this context one could agree that the Bulgarian tailor could be more easily integrated in, say, Italy, than a Chinese one. At the same time a Polish plumber is less problematic for the French labour market than a Pakistani computer expert. On the other hand, for EU social cohesion is it better if a Romanian engineer remains in Romania while a Moroccan one does the job in Spain?

Once more the solution to this complicated charade is a political Europe. Only the politically integrated EU is able to put in motion those policies which should reach simultaneously four targets: a) social cohesion within the Union which, among others, will distribute equally and equitably the European jobs and the European labour in all member states; b) flexibility and effectiveness of a European immigration policy which will favour demographic growth in Europe, will consolidate the European heritage of cultural diversity and will bring the necessary labour force where it is most needed; c) the development of the European capacity to socially integrate the non-European immigrants; d) the export of an appropriate quantity of European wealth (through a duly communitarized aid for development policy) in such a way as to offer a decent perspective of life for everyone in his/her own country, thus allowing in the labour which is not needed in Europe to remain in its land of origin.

## 6. European Phobias and Philiias to Russia and the US



### The America - image in Europe and in my country

#### Edit Herczog

Following the 1968 events, a new era started in Hungary, I will never forget the afternoon when I bought my first bottle of Coca Cola in 1972 and when I purchased my first Lewis Jeans or saw a Marlboro advertisement. These emphasised everything we wanted: the protest against the older generation, the wish for freedom and the right to protest, in one word: the feeling of being different. When the first McDonald's opened in Budapest in 1988, the queue was a kilometre long. But even if sometimes we see the United States as a dream that lived for long in the people of Central Europe, we have to admit that after the revolution of 1956 Hungarians were disappointed, as the US left the country alone in the fight against the Soviet repression.

Following all the global trends up in these recent years, I can say that the domination of negative feelings in the attitude towards the United States of America, as the world's only superpower, is getting more and more perceptible in many parts of the world. Among the reasons - together with its superpower status - we can find the acute opposition within Europe, which is becoming more and more independent escaping from the protective American nuclear umbrella, and the contradictions of the Middle East policy of the US government. The culmination of these hostile feelings is, in fact, the effect of a long and complex process.

In the background there is a high level of distrust towards globalisation that is correlated with the huge American global companies and brands in people's mind. The fact of dependence on American power - economic, military and financial - reinforced the anti-globalisation



feeling also in Europe, where a strong opposition has arisen towards the uncontrollable rule of a global superpower, its government, its huge multinational companies and their arrogance. Besides these, the role played by the United States in the IMF and in the World Bank through which Washington constantly laid down strict conditions for the developing countries -fighting with high indebtedness-might have also played a significant role in the negative judgement of the American type of economic development. Nevertheless, most likely it was the Iraq War that brought all these earlier existing feelings to the surface. It brought a new wave of opposition and the risk of a fading of the myth of the American culture and the 'American dream'.

I assume anti-Americanism has never been as strong and as popular as it is lately. And I am afraid that, over the last ten years, this revulsion got a separate political dimension, too. But did the 'America brand' really fade? Can we talk about actual phobia towards the US?

As a matter of fact, the negative effects of anti-Americanism are already felt in the sector of tourism, it seems currently America is losing its appeal. But might it mean that all the hearts in Europe and in the world are dominated by contrary feelings? Isn't it just a short term trend?

I strongly believe that the majority of the population of several countries still adore the United States, the American culture, its movies, its economy, its companies, their innovativity and especially its new president and the foreign policy of Washington. In Europe there are famous pro-Americans, such as the Czech Vaclav Havel or his economic reformist fellows in Central Europe, and of course the British solidarists from Lady Thatcher to Tony Blair who have been the bastions of pro-Americanism for the last 30 years.

My country, Hungary, is a Central European state with strong historic links to the Austro-German sphere of interest. But after the Second World War it got under the Soviet sphere of interest, and this fact affected radically the fate of the Hungarians for the next decades. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, of course, lots of things changed. Peoples of Eastern Europe turned their faces to the Western dreams like McDonald's, American movies and culture, to that America-image which had been unreachable for them

for decades. At that time everybody was pro-American, as America meant freedom, rupture with the socialist system, and opening the borders to the West; as a whole, America meant a free lifestyle.

When Hungary became member of the NATO in 1999, it meant a significant structural change in the economic and political orientation of the country as well as in its social order. It meant a real step towards the 'Western dreams'. But the years passed and even after the accession to the European Union people could not feel relief as their quality of life did not change a lot. They became disappointed in the Western pattern. Finally, at the time of the Iraq War the anti-Americanism in Hungary reached its peak, people turned away from the US and its ideology even if the government supported the American mission. However the negative feelings have been decreasing since then, and the American economic performance serves as a pattern for Hungary again.

Even if I became aware of this shift in people's feeling about the United States and their disbelief, I do not think that the 'America brand' is fading. We can sense a kind of phobia towards the US, that might be called 'anti-Americanism' but I believe this is 'just' a short term trend. The United States is still a model for the Central European economies, for innovation, for the democracies as well as for people's lifestyle.





## **Being Russia's Neighbour - Undoubtedly Beneficial for Finland**

**Riitta Myller**

The Finnish War fought between the Russian Empire and Sweden 200 years ago is recalled in a series of events organised in Finland between 2008 and 2009. As a result of the war Finland, which belonged to Sweden for 600 years, was annexed to the Russian Empire as an autonomous Grand Duchy. The period of autonomy was mainly successful for Finland in terms of economic and cultural progress and societal development.

Finland gained independence on 6th December 1917 in conjunction with the Russian Revolution. We were able to retain our independence in the Winter War fought between 1939 and 1940 a part of the Second World War. The Winter War began when the Soviet Union attacked Finland. After losing the war Finland had to cede 10% of her territory to the USSR and, among other concessions, the second biggest city, Vyborg. When the Russian Air Force bombed Helsinki and other locations on 25th June 1941, Finland declared war on the Soviet Union and commenced a land offensive alongside the German troops situated in Finland. In the aftermath of the war, the Continuation War, Finland lost more land from Eastern and Northern Finland and had to resettle 400,000 evacuees from the lost land areas. As far as I know, no other country in the world has carried out a comparable resettlement of evacuees. The Karelians who resettled in Finland have had an influence on the Finnish cultural life ever since.

The two wars have left their mark on the Finnish minds. The wars marked a significant change in the Finnish foreign policy. The policy of neutrality and good, friendly relations with the Soviet Union became the central political principles of Finnish foreign policy. Foreign policy has always been a uniting factor in Finland. According to President Kekkonen, a long-standing President and a man who distinguished himself as a trustworthy administrator of Finnish-Soviet relations, when it is necessary to choose

between ill-managed internal politics and ill-managed foreign policy, the former should always be chosen. The membership of the European Union and the preceding transformation of the Soviet Union into Russia have added twist to foreign policy. In 1994 an advisory referendum was held to ask voters whether Finland should join the European Union. The referendum that was organised simultaneously with local elections saw a high 74% turnout. Almost 57% voted in favour of Finnish membership. One of the significant reasons for the success of the “yes” vote was the idea that by joining the EU, Finland would receive a military security guarantee against Russia.

Of all the countries in the EU, Finland has the longest common border with Russia: 1340 km. Russia is one of Finland’s three biggest trading partners; the trade volumes amount to those with Germany and Sweden. Tourism from



*View over Koli National Park*





*Töölö Bay at Helsinki in  
Autumn colors*

Russia is in a class of its own when compared to other countries. Following China, Finland is the second most popular holiday resort for Russians. In 2007 2.80 million Russians travelled to Finland, 2.88 million to China. On top of that the Russians also spend much more money than other tourists.

The Finns' attitude toward Russia has varied in the course of time. In the latest of a series of surveys called 'Finland, EU and the Rest of the World' by the Finnish Business and Policy Forum EVA, published in Autumn 2007, 79% of the Finns reckoned Russia is once again a noteworthy, self-assertive great power in world politics. Majority (57%) finds no reason for a negative attitude toward Russia despite the country's own problems. Eight out of ten think Russia is not a democratic country in Western terms. Nevertheless, this perception does not result in a negative stand towards Russia.

Research shows Russia is a complex country that is not



easy to understand. The Finns are divided on Russia. Those that have the most critical stance towards the country think Finland is entitled to speak out about international issues even if this might place a burden on Finnish-Russian relations. In the survey 41% thought this way. A slightly smaller proportion of the surveyed, 37%, finds that Finland should not speak out about issues that might risk good relations with Russia.

Research shows the Finns are quite unaware of how the membership of the EU has changed our position in relation to Russia. Only a fourth, 26% see that Finland should manage the relations with Russia at EU level instead of bilateral diplomacy. 46% support bilateral diplomacy and three out of ten, 29% do not have an opinion on the issue.

Despite Russia being an important trade partner for Finland, 40% of the Finns consider Finnish firms' investments in Russia considerably riskier. A majority, 59% are instead worried about increasing Russian ownership within Finland. The Finns, especially in Eastern Finland, have voiced their concern about the growing Russian interest in buying real estate and lots for holiday purposes. The opposition to such phenomenon is growing. However, Russians bought only a total of 619 properties in 2007. What's more, the prices paid were normally twice as high as those paid by Finns.

Above all, the Finns are worried about practical environmental, economic and traffic-related issues when it comes to relations with Russia. The biggest cause for concern is the environmental strain on the Baltic Sea caused by wastewater from St. Petersburg. 83% of the surveyed find it extremely important for the problem to be taken care of. 74% consider the improvement of truck and other traffic conditions on the Eastern border very important. 67% call for a resolution of the dispute about timber tariffs, which Russia has set on exported felled timber. Slightly over half of the surveyed regard it of great importance to ensure stable energy supply from Russia.

It is clear that both economic as well as other cooperation between Finland and Russia will increase. Thus it is a pity that only a few Finnish pupils choose to learn Russian.





## **American Foreign Policy is Heavily Criticised in Finland, a Country Pervaded by Americanism**

**Riitta Myller**

Plans have been laid for a 90,000m<sup>2</sup> recreational centre to be built in the proximity of the Helsinki-Vantaa airport. “It will be the most American recreational centre in Europe”, a representative of the contractor boasted in a radio interview. In addition to the stores and boutiques, the complex contains a hotel, a spa, several cinemas as well as a fitness centre. In the United States similar complexes were reputedly already built in the 1970's.

Finland is often considered a country permeated by the American way of life, a “Little America”. Even if some consider this as something to boast about, the ascendancy of American culture over the Finnish national culture is causing growing concern.

There are no scientific ways to determine how American the Finns actually are. However, the Finnish Americans that visit the country often wonder about the transformation the Finnish way of life has undergone. They have noticed the fast food habits, the overwhelming supply of American TV shows and movies and especially the infiltration of English into everyday language.

The United States and the American way of life have had their special place in the Finnish hearts and minds since the end of the 19th century. Approximately 400,000 Finns emigrated overseas in search of gold between 1860 and 1930, many of them from Ostrobothnia, a region to the west coast of Finland. When compared to the population of the country at the time, this meant over 7% of the whole population. Consequently 650,000 of today's Americans consider themselves ethnically Finnish. The population of Finland is now 5,3 million; many Finns thus have relatives in North America.

Despite the popularity enjoyed by America and the American way of life in Finland, the Finns have a highly critical stance on American foreign policy. Only 7%

consider the Americans' actions in world politics worth supporting. Three out of four, 76%, do not approve the US actions. The Finns' attitude towards the US foreign policy has been studied annually since 2002 and opinion has been persistently disapproving. The Bush administration's foreign policy was not welcomed by any group in the population. Tellingly, even the majority of people supporting Finnish NATO membership think the US is not acting rightly on the world stage.

However, majority of the Finns do think that it is of vital national interest to maintain good diplomatic relations with both great powers –the United States and Russia. Most of the Finns, 64%, are also satisfied with handling of the Finnish-US relations.

Finnish-US relations are constantly used as a political weapon in national power struggles. The National Coalition Party in particular has constantly blamed President Tarja



*On a boat at a one of the  
hundreds of thousands  
lakes in Finland*





Halonen, a Social Democrat, for poor Finnish-US relations. The critique has also been directed at Mr Erkki Tuomioja (SDP), a Foreign Minister in previous cabinets.

Accordingly, the new centre-right government has emphasised the importance of the United States. Among the first things he did, Mr Ilkka Kanerva, the newly elected Foreign Minister (who was later forced to resign), was to symbolically visit the US Secretary of State, Mrs Condoleezza Rice. The visit was exceptionally well covered by the national media.

The Social Democrats have also been blamed for being too sympathetic toward the United States. In the 2003 parliamentary elections, the contemporary opposition leader, Mrs Anneli Jäätteenmäki from the Centre Party, criticised the Social Democratic Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen for being too supportive of the US Foreign Policy and of the invasion of Iraq. Her arguments were based on confidential Foreign Ministry documents. The Centre Party beat the Social Democrats by a single parliamentary seat and thus managed to secure the seat of the Prime Minister for their leader, Mrs Jäätteenmäki. After three months Mrs Jäätteenmäki, however, was forced to resign when she failed to explain how she got her hands on the confidential documents she had used in the contest against Lipponen.

Despite the occasional drama squeezed out of the Finnish-US relations, surveys tell the Finns are satisfied with Halonen's management of the Finnish foreign policy. Of the surveyed, 77% think Mrs Halonen has done well. The cabinet, however, does not receive such a good rating. Only half of the surveyed were happy with how the cabinet is conducting foreign policy; this is regardless of the fact that, according to the constitution, the President and the cabinet are to manage foreign policy in concert with each other.

## Who in Europe Loves the US, and Who in Europe Loves Russia

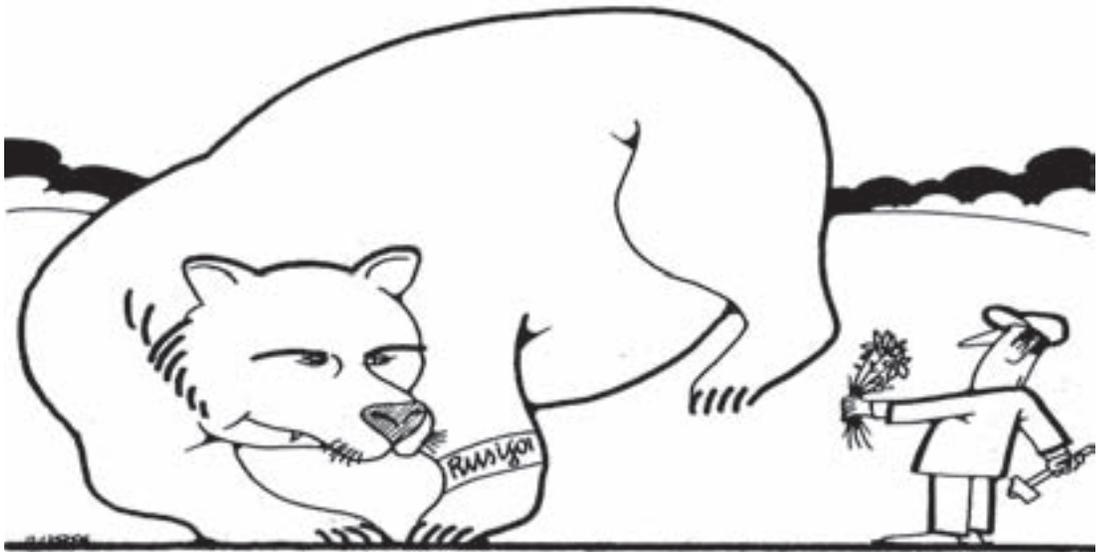


### Justas Paleckis

Among the old EU members and the ten former countries of the communist camp that became part of the EU in the XXI century, there is still a more or less wide gap that has remained in the standards of living, the installation of new technology, views towards gender equality, foreigners and sexual minorities and finally alcohol usage and driving culture. As time passes, this gap should be bridged owing to financial flows that go to the new EU countries and due to a better understanding of one another, closer relations that are developed by living (but in no way merging) with one another in one union.

One of these lines of demarcation is reflected in the views towards the US and Russia. Officially both of these countries are strategic partners of the EU. The Council of the EU, the European Parliament and Commission organize regular meetings with the leaders and national parliamentary members of these countries, negotiations, consultations and more or less heartfelt conversations are taking place. In reality, of course, the US is much closer to

*Baltic EU States see Russia  
as a giant which is flexing its  
industrial, military and influence*





the EU, due to the fact that almost all EU countries belong to NATO, led by the US. There is another aspect that is no less important. Though the shadows of the Iraq war and Guantanamo Bay have clouded over the relations of the EU and US, their relations are good, because they are joined by common values. The EU and Russia are linked by gas and oil; however, energy sources and mercantile interests should not soften EU's language in the dialogue on human rights in Russia.

At first glance it may seem strange, but even after the Russia-Georgia war most of the inhabitants of the old EU members consider the US to be the biggest threat to world security. There is a different image in the new EU countries that formerly belonged to the USSR or its sphere of influence. A massive Russia beckons nearby, a giant, which has awakened after a phase of public withdrawal and territorial shrinkage and is now flexing her industrial, military and influence-expanding muscles.

During the first half of the last century, Franklin Roosevelt always repeated: remember that we all come from immigrants and revolutionaries. There is a surge of immigrants to the US and now, the US is reaping the benefits of the minds of all five continents thanks to its huge money flows and top-rate conditions. However this revolutionary attitude has remained in the distant past of the active and energetic founders of the US. Fundamental conservatism has taken a step forward, with George W. Bush being a faithful follower and disseminator of this belief. Americans have supported their president, his professed policy of democracy and the export of its values in two elections. However they did not do it during the 2008 elections.

Western Europeans do not dislike the US as much as they disliked George W. Bush and his policies. In Eastern and Central Europe, Russia is not looked at with suspicion as much as Vladimir Putin and his policies are. And it is unfortunate, that it is precisely these sorts of policies that an absolute majority of Russians want. Dmitry Medvedev continues with the same policies, where a "national idea" and "special way of Russia" are being entrenched even further. I remember hearing an ironic joke in Moscow that goes "earlier we erred, thinking that we were on the right

path - now the same with our special path...” One can state, that the colourful phrase of Winston Churchill said 80 years ago has not lost its lustre: “Russia...it is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.”

Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia react even more sensitively to an ever stronger Russia than other new EU members. Some parties in Lithuania even declared a “Stop Russia” programme. Those who want to bring around this stop are looking at a world that has changed greatly, where threats grow by the day, and still through the prism of the Cold War. George Kennan declared a policy of containment with the USSR in totally different times, and to copy it now would be naive.

In the Socialist group of the European Parliament, there is a prevailing opinion that dialogue with Russia, regardless of difficulty, is unavoidable. The EU has raised and will continue to raise the issue of human rights in Russia, and has worked together and will work together in many spheres in the future.

The divide between old members and newer members of the EU on the issue of Russia, will, I believe lessen. For westerners it would be beneficial to absorb some of the cautiousness and fortitude from those in the east in their stance towards Russia. We could certainly learn something from the western Europeans’ belief in themselves and their practical stance towards Russia.



*MEP Justas Paleckis (on the right) with Mikhail Gorbachev, the last head of USSR at Energy Globe Awards 2008 in EP, his daughter and assistant*





## Will the US Stride Together with Europe?

### Justas Paleckis

The election that caused shockwaves across the US and the entire world gave an historical victory to Barack Obama and trounced hardened fundamentalist conservatism. The financial crisis ruined the Thatcherism-Reaganism myth promising prosperity when everything is left unchecked to the invisible hand of the market, brushing aside the state and putting pleasures on life's credit card.

The European Union offers an alternative route to the one which George W. Bush led America on for 8 years. Barack Obama's programme in many cases coincides with the view of Brussels and with the suggestions of the Socialist group of the European Parliament. It is not by chance that in the US, Barack Obama is called a "socialist", a bad word for many Americans, which in Europe has a different ring to it.

Brussels says that climate change cannot only take away a world familiar to us from future generations, but is already now becoming the biggest threat to our security. George W. Bush declined to join the Kyoto Protocol and avoided the fight against climate change. Barack Obama's position is different. After all there is only a moment left, approximately 8-10 years, in which we will be able to stop changes that afterwards will be irreversible.

The former US president conquered and occupied Iraq under a false pretext, violating the norms of international law and drawing a "coalition of the willing" into this adventure. The core EU countries did not participate in it. Barack Obama voted against the war and declared that right after he enters the White House he will start the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq. George W. Bush threatened Iran with bombing, while the new president wants to talk with the Iranian president without any set preconditions, which is what Brussels is suggesting. The European Union is famous in the world for its "soft power", and with its ability based on its example to engage other countries, and send experts to them, and not tanks and troops. This road was

never an attractive one for the outgoing president. The new president can approach it in a different way.

The George W. Bush administration depreciatingly and short-sightedly divided up Europe into Old Europe (the biggest EU countries, which did not blindly follow hawkish Washington) and New Europe (the EU's newest members, which were ready to do precisely this). This kind of division is foreign to Barack Obama, which he talked about expressly in his election campaign.

The leaders of the large EU states who went to Washington did not stay quiet on the torturing of suspected terrorists at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. Words remained only words. However the new president is prepared to close Guantanamo Bay.



*B.Obama's program  
in many cases coincides with the  
view of Brussels. B.Obama's  
speech in Berlin*





The EU support for developing countries is double that of America's, though the latter is richer. The new president promises change. Not because his father is from Kenya, but simply so the world can have a future where the gap would lessen between the richest and the poorest countries. The outgoing president did not understand this, and did not manage to understand the roots of terrorism.

The European social model is unique, as it supports the weakest members of society, and the difference between the richest and the poorest is smaller in comparison to the US and other countries. Barack Obama is also planning to help the average person and shift the difficulties of the crisis on the shoulders of the rich, while maintaining levels of spending for healthcare and education. The former president and most Republicans thought differently on this matter.

What is a pro-American policy? It is one thing when politicians who have entrenched themselves in the White House and Capitol Hill are obsessed with a mania of US infallibility and flinging democratic values from bombers. However it is something else when this kind of policy goes bankrupt and a person who is not similar to his predecessors enters the scene. Not only in terms of his skin colour, but with his knowledge of the world joining many continents and faith in a policy of change, and not a policy of the stick.

There is not as much anti-Americanism in Europe as there is anti-Bushism, of which there is plenty. Even after military action in Georgia, Western Europeans considered the US of George W. Bush a greater threat to world security than Russia.

The outgoing US president has been called a foreign body on the planet of the 21st century. An era of militaristic thinking draws to a close together with George W. Bush. The times of the US as the world policeman are ending, as the country is economically and militarily stretched. The US alone is not able to deal with even one threat hanging above our planet (of which there are many). This could also be said about the rest of the world – we would not be able to move ahead without America. Only together with China, Russia, India, South America and Africa can the US and the European Union overcome crucial challenges.

Radicals on the left and right are predicting that we will not see anything new on the Washington front and after the elections. The leader of the White House, even if he wants, will not be able to change essential things. This view seems to be proved by Barack Obama's steps in creating a broad coalition by inviting moderate Republicans into his team.

Yes, the new president will defend US interests just as doggedly and resourcefully as George W. Bush did. However the leader of the White House, it seems, understands well that these interests cannot come into confrontation with the interests of other continents and the entire world.

Barack Obama's win was greeted with joy by the Socialist group of the European Parliament, but minus the euphoria. The group maintains close relations with the Democrats of the US Congress, and exchanges delegations and experience. However we understand the huge mountain of problems that fall upon the new president and how much hope people are pinning on his future decisions. Barack Obama does not have a magic wand. However he has the chance to turn this huge country around from a dead-end road, which the policies of his predecessor put the country on.



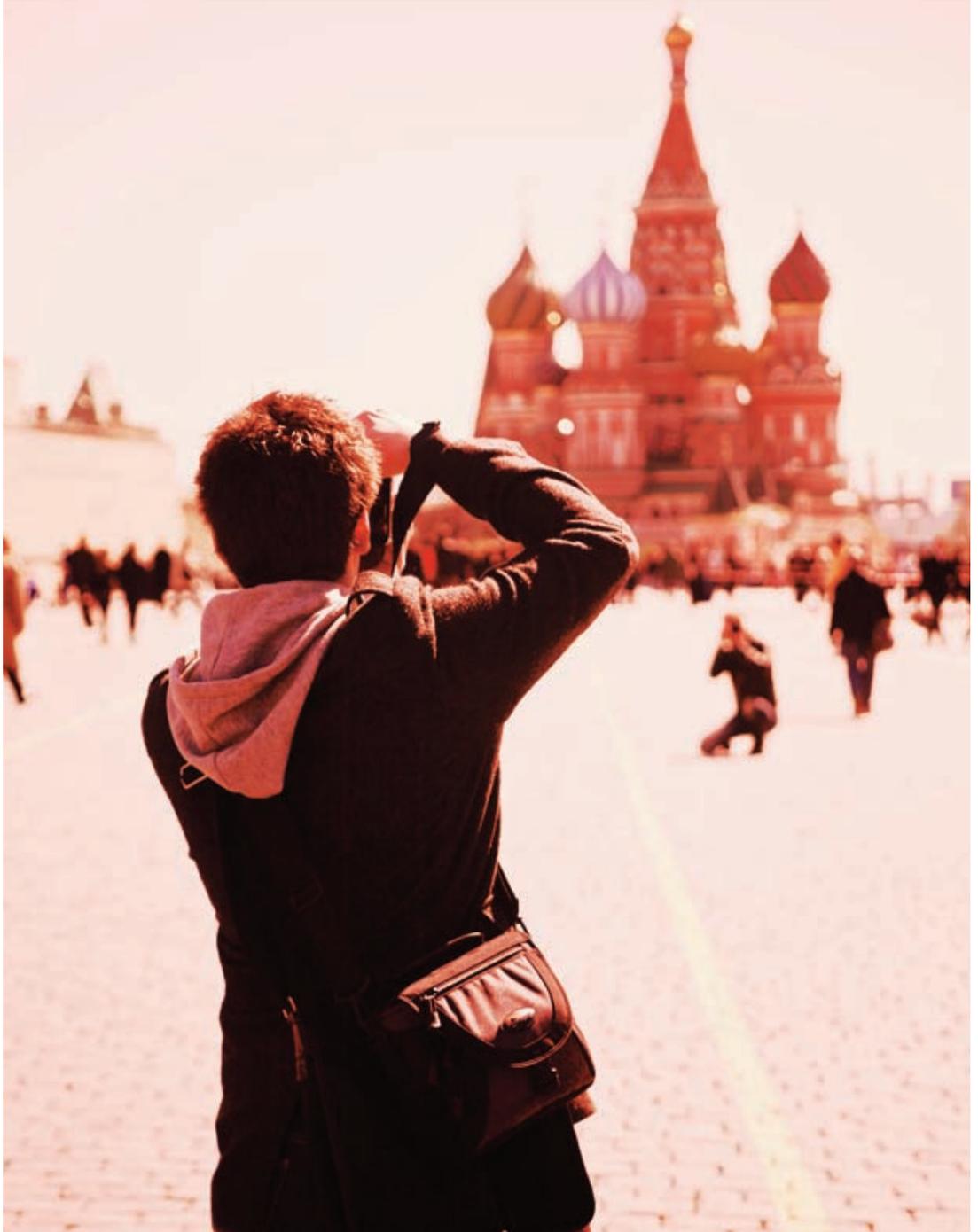


## Russia is Not the Soviet Union

### Libor Roucek

A lively discussion on the issue of the relations with Russia has emerged recently. On one hand, Russia under the rule of President Putin experienced unusual rise in the last years. Its economy grows (not only due to the raw materials prices increase) by rate of more than seven per cent annually, public finances are in surplus and people (even the ordinary ones) are much more well-to-do than they were in Boris Yeltsin's time. On the other hand, in the same Russia and under the rule of the same President Putin, many a negative trend has been taking place. We witness weakening of democracy, deterioration of the conditions for nongovernmental organizations and political opposition to operate in, strengthening of state control over media, interference into independent courts' proceedings etc. The rising power of the state-run or partly state-run energy conglomerates also has been a cause of concern in Europe. According to many observers, through these conglomerates the Kremlin could gain undue influence over the operation of strategically important and sensitive sectors, such as the production and distribution of natural gas and electricity in EU Member countries.

How should the European Union respond to the development in Russia? In what way should it act? I'm convinced that Russia is and will be in the future our important partner. After all we inhabit one continent together with Russia; we are tied with Russia in energy and economic interdependence; we won't be able to solve any serious international problem (Kosovo, the Middle East, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, terrorism or climate change) without cooperation between the EU and Russia. Fair and solid



*Europe cannot solve security, energy  
and economic challenges it faces without Russia*



neighbourly relations between the EU and Russia are doubtless of major importance for stability, security and prosperity of the entire Europe.

While developing these relations the Union shouldn't forget fundamental values and ideals upon which it was founded, however: human and civil rights, democracy and the rule of law. It's necessary to bring up these values at meetings and during negotiations with Russia's representatives today in the same way as was the case in the 1970s and 1980s. It's also necessary to meet and discuss with human rights' advocates, civil society activists, with nongovernmental organizations and politicians from the opposition parties. And at the same time it's requisite to clearly communicate to our Russian friends that the European market will be fully open for Russian companies only in case that the Russian market, including the energy sector, will accordingly be open for the European companies.

Today's Russia is not the Soviet Union. Although there are many problems and controversies, its general development is not in a bad direction. In addition there is a lot of potential and opportunities. Make the best out of them! For the common benefit of both the European Union and Russia.

## A Czech Perspective on the United States

### Libor Roucek

The United States has been a symbol of freedom and justice for ordinary people all around the world since its establishment in the 18th century. Already, in his “Democracy in America”, first published in 1835, French historian and political thinker Alexis de Tocqueville expressed admiration of the US political system and its democratic governance based on a constitution and fundamental rights for all. People who have believed in freedom, democracy and justice have looked across the Atlantic for inspiration. The United States has also been a haven for those who have found themselves in misery or social or economic deprivation. During the 19th century hundreds of thousands of Europeans left the continent to look for prosperity and a better life in the "land of opportunity". Following the Second World War, the United States warmly welcomed people who had escaped from the persecution and political oppression of totalitarian regimes. These aspects of the US have all contributed to the respect and confidence that the United States has enjoyed from its partners and even its foes until recently.

The United States has a unique, arguably even special position in the history of the Czech Republic. It was in part US President Woodrow Wilson's promotion of the concept of the right of national self-determination which enabled the establishment of the state of Czechoslovakia: During the First World War, the first Czechoslovak president, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, drew the attention of Americans to the political desires and interests of the Czechs and Slovaks and the important agreement between them for a common state was signed in the US city of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. Masaryk also convinced President Wilson to support the establishment, on 28 October 1918, of the original Czechoslovak state; a new multinational country in the heart of Central Europe, which replaced the hundreds year-old rule of the Habsburg monarchy with a democratic and republican Czechoslovakia, inspired by American





values and by its political system. The close relationship of the new state to the United States was symbolically expressed by President Masaryk's use of his American wife's name, Garrigue. This symbolism is even more important for the Czech Social Democratic Party because of Charlotte Garrigue's active support of the social democratic movement in our country.

Although democratic Czechoslovakia lasted for less than twenty years, the values it represented and its relationship with the USA had become firmly established in our society. Therefore, even decades under totalitarian regimes, both Nazi and Communist, did not uproot in the consciousness of the Czechoslovak nation the perception of the United States as the unshakable lighthouse of freedom and justice. Although separated from much of the rest of the world by the Iron Curtain, the Czechs, both those at home and in exile, looked to the light from the other side of the Atlantic with an expectation of change in their homeland.

After the collapse of communism in 1989, most Czechs expressed their warm welcome of US support for the newly democratic state and honoured the leading role Washington



*The plan to deploy US anti-missile defence system in the Czech Republic raised strong opposition of Czech citizens*

played in world affairs. The United States once again became the officially accepted guarantor of Czech security and independence. We have since become even more firmly anchored in the transatlantic community through our membership – welcomed by the majority of Czech citizens - in NATO and the European Union.

The attitude of many Czechs to the US has, however, significantly changed over the past eight years because of the Administration of George W. Bush. In particular, the unilateral and self-interested foreign policy pursued by the White House has instigated public disapproval of US policies. This was exemplified by the very different reception given to two American presidents in the Czech Republic: When then President George H.W. Bush came to Prague in 1990, he was warmly welcomed by tens of thousands of Czechs in Wenceslas Square. As a reporter for the Voice of America at the time, I had the opportunity to witness personally this public manifestation of enthusiasm and good will on the Czech side. In contrast, when George W. Bush visited the Czech Republic seventeen years later, in 2007, he had to face more than five thousand protesters demonstrating their opposition to American foreign policy.

What is the cause of this change in the Czechs' attitude towards the United States? Although there are many factors that influence the image of the US, recently the main concern of Czech citizens has been the proposed deployment of a US anti-missile defence system in the Czech Republic. There is strong public opposition to this plan with almost two thirds of the population objecting to the Czech Government's support for the system. The US Administration has, since the launch of talks about the radar system, likewise ignored the voices of civil society as well as many well-known personalities. The issue of missile defence has certainly undermined Czech support of American policies in Europe and the rest of the world, as in the wars in Iraq and Kosovo. Public anxiety about US policies is, paradoxically, in contradiction to the efforts of the government in Prague to strengthen bilateral relations between our two countries.

The radar issue has significantly increased awareness about security among Czechs. However, our citizens, as well as most other Europeans, do not consider the





establishment of a new military facility to be a contribution to our national security or to stability in the world. The solution is, instead, to strengthen partnership within the transatlantic area – partnership that should be based on close cooperation, solidarity and equality. The Bush Administration has proved incapable of taking its partners' interests into account. It has, furthermore, resorted to unilateralism and the use of force to solve global problems, thereby widening the gap between America and its European allies – a development that the Czech Republic and its citizens have regarded as a threat.

The result of the recent election in the United States has brought new hope to many Czechs that the incoming Democratic President will improve relations with Europe. A new framework for cooperation is needed and new challenges have to be tackled together, using different means than those employed over the past eight years. I hope that diplomacy and a new multilateralism will be preferred to military force and sophisticated weaponry. Climate change and poverty cannot be fought with even with the best-equipped troops. We cannot promote the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction while deploying missiles and radar. We instead need renewed political commitment to solve problems together in cooperation, with all stakeholders.

The election of Barack Obama is the best demonstration of a change in attitude, both in Washington and amongst the American public, to global challenges and threats. The President-elect has already stressed that his administration will establish international partnership with respect to the interests of others. He has, therefore, promised to abandon contentious practices defended by the Bush Government with steps including the closure of the Guantanamo Bay prison and a ban on the use of torture. He has pledged to promote, by American example, democracy, freedom and fundamental rights though out the world - values which the United States has championed over the last century and which have made America the symbol, for millions around the globe, of a better life. I believe that the majority of Czechs share my hope and conviction that we are now entering into a new, fairer stage of relations with the United States as a trustworthy and honest partner.

## A Book of Complaints

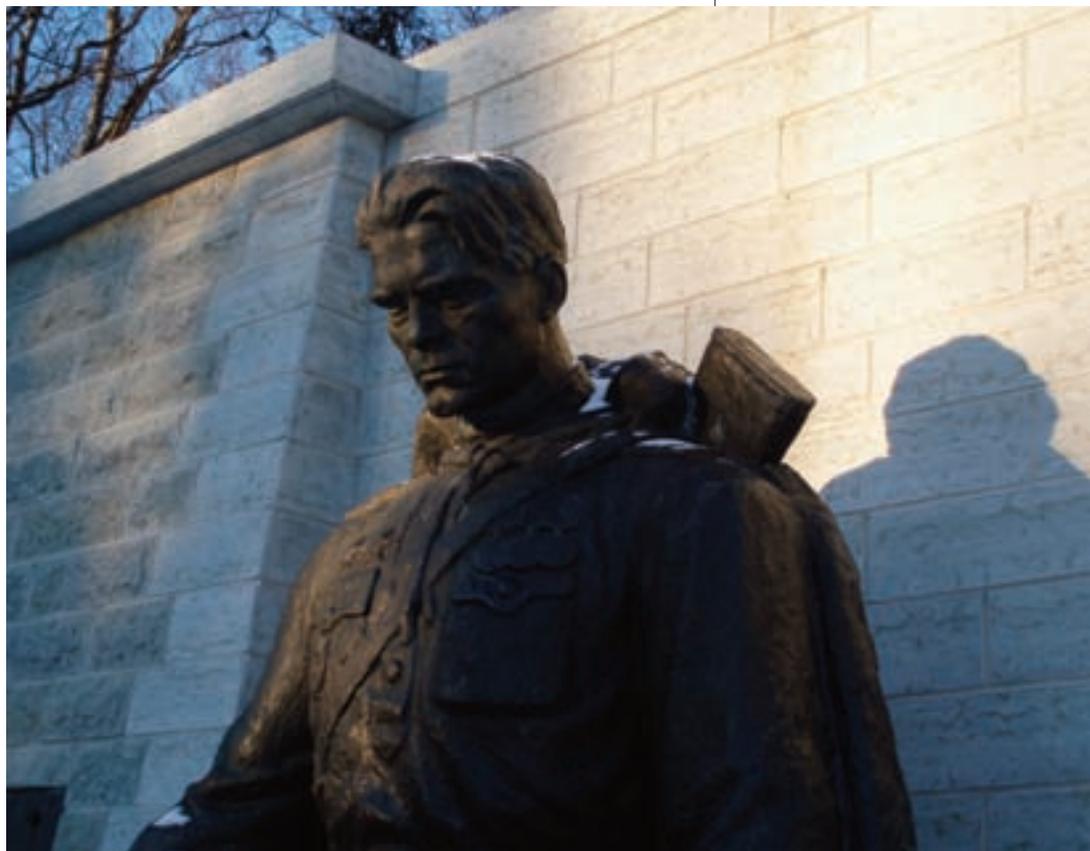
**Katrin Saks**

There are thirty or forty people queuing at the ticket office of a metro station in Moscow. I look round inquisitively: surely there must be a ticket machine somewhere? Apparently the state which continuously has grave problems with employing people to produce things of quality, tries to alleviate the unemployment issues by appointing salespeople of every possible kind. On the other hand, however, on a string at the cashier desk there hangs a „Book of Complaints”, familiar from the Soviet period.

For those blissfully unaware: a book of complaints is a little notebook, where the customers can record their negative comments, e.g. concerning the long queue or a



*The World Famous Bronze  
Soldier in Tallinn*





*Main speaker at a conference  
"The Future of Social  
Democracy in Europe"*

quarrelsome cashier, who has decided to unload her existential misery on the queuing crowd. It is not that such complaining would make the queue shorter or the cashier nicer, but it is a valve to let off the steam in a society, where it is impossible to take your complaints to those who actually decide something. And you definitely cannot complain about the decision-makers themselves.

The press, who should serve as a watchdog, has been muzzled. It does not criticise the powers that be, who presently attempt to re-gain their temporarily-lost power over the people. And they do not only want to control their own people, they also want to control those who counted as „one’s own” a little while ago.

It is exactly the issue of losing control that constitutes the greatest issue in Moscow’s relationship with its former Soviet republics. It is true, that the lost political control over e. g. the Baltic states, is today partly being replaced by economic control. This happens indirectly through various



investments and more bluntly by means of, for example, the Russian state's interference in the transit trade. When Moscow didn't like Lithuania's plans for the privatisation of energy enterprises, the oil pipe was closed with the explanation that it needed repair. When Moscow didn't approve of the relocation of the monument to the „liberators” in Estonia, it directed its transit elsewhere. Actually, in the latter case the cause of the disapproval is not entirely clear, as in Russia itself at least three monuments to the heroes of the selfsame war were taken down the same year. So the monument couldn't have been the only trigger of annoyance. Rather one could talk about using an opportunity to pour oil on the already high-flame fire of Estonia's internal controversy, in order to de-stabilise a difficult situation further. If it didn't have any other direct goal, it was certainly useful to harm the reputation of a previously successful small state.

„The situation of the Russian minority” is a good pretext, in order to, firstly, obtain a reason to interfere, and, secondly, in order to undermine the credibility of the Baltic states in international organisations, where they often point to Russia's not fulfilling its international responsibilities concerning human rights, or to its persecution of its Finno-Ugric minority peoples. After all, a critic, who has failed its own homework, cannot be taken very seriously.

Recently something quite typical in that respect happened at the world congress of the Finno-Ugric people in Hanti-Mansiysk: Russians interpreted the Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves's speech, addressing the kindred peoples, as an attack on the Russian state and re-butted strongly in the style „but look what is happening on your own home ground”. Yet the situations of Russians in Estonia on the one hand, and that of the Hanti and the Mansi, for example, on the other, are quite incomparable already for the reason that the latter are indigenous minorities who have lived in their territory for thousands of years and whom the discovery of oil there has greatly endangered. Furthermore, actually the Russians in Estonia have not only more rights than the Hanti and the Mansi (for example, they can obtain secondary education in their mother tongue), but they also have more rights than the Russians in Russia. Because these are rights that are





guaranteed under a democratic state order. If these rights should be violated, one has the opportunity to complain. And to complain in the real world, not only in a book of complaints.

In 2004 the new member states of the European Union brought with them a complex and difficult geographical relationship and historical experience. The discordant interpretations of history are often considered as one of the main reasons for the antagonism between those states and Russia. Russia blames us for „re-writing” history and we feel indignant that Russia has failed to give a fair assessment of the historical wrongs committed. Would the latter help, however? Russia did admit its mass murder of Polish officers and apologised, but there is still no great friendship between Poland and Russia. An apology is clearly not enough.

I believe that as long as the neighbours of Russia sense its continuing attempts to control them, the relations will not get better. First of all, the Russians ought to free themselves from their mission to rule the world.

I hope that the famous Hungarian author Sándor Márai is wrong in his belief that „the politics of Russia is unchanging. /.../ What changes is methods, tactics, manoeuvres, but the Northern Star of his politics - rule over the world - is a firm constant.

I am standing in the Red Square in Moscow on a bright summer day - a place where some months ago after a very long while there took place an enormous demonstration of power. There is no long queue in front of the Lenin Mausoleum anymore, but, on the other hand, there is an opportunity to have your picture taken with a self-made Lenin in the square. I am looking at the young Russians who are posing for the photos, trying to remember the exact numbers in the poll conducted among the young people, which showed that a large part of them thinks that in the name of Russia's being powerful, it is acceptable to temporarily give up democracy. This frightens me, but there is no-one to complain to.

## My Grandfather was a Russian

### Katrin Saks

There is a suit jacket in my closet that I still sometimes wear. It dates back to pre-war Estonia. It is flawlessly tailored. It even has a silk lining. It was made for my grandfather, who died about a month before I saw the light of day. He must have been the same size as me, for the jacket fits me well.

My granddad was born in St. Petersburg during the century before last. His name was Ivanov. He arrived in Estonia with the Russian Imperial Army in 1919.

Like it or not, by fighting for his motherland Russia, he also contributed to saving Estonia, he was one of several thousand White Guardsmen fighting the Soviet Red Guard. He survived the bullets, the extremely rough weather, and typhus that was ravaging Estonia back then. And I think he must have been a good lumberjack, since they didn't send him back to where he had come from – to Russia. By 1940s, he was fully integrated and well-off and it didn't take him long to fall in love with an ash-blond Estonian belle, whom he later married and had a daughter named Liidia, my mother, in 1923. Although little Liidia barely spoke Russian, the relatives never stopped calling her “the little Russian”.

Granddad was furious when he heard, that Estonia, without even firing a shot, gave in to Soviet demands to establish military bases in 1940. Family legend has it that he said, if all Estonians had been half as much Estonian as he was, they wouldn't have let the Soviet troops waltz right in.

Knowing that my Russian granddad played a positive role in Estonian history was particularly important to me. I can only wonder how I would have felt if my grandfather had been a submarine captain or a Communist Party official leading the Soviet industrialization of Estonia. But even if that had been the case, I could not have denied my ancestry. I would still have felt the need to justify his presence in my country, to feel as if he and I were ‘one of us’. I would not





*Katrin Saks,  
Member of European  
Parliament*

have wanted to be one of ‘them’, the occupiers. Otherwise, I would have been an outsider, an opposing force.

This is the opportunity that we haven’t fully given to our Russians. We have not sufficiently helped them to create or find their identity, our common identity. There are virtually no positive Russian characters in the history books, Estonian films, or novels for which young people could feel compassion or with which they could identify. I don’t remember Russian heroes that we, in Estonia, felt proud of. With the exception of cultural figures, Russians in Estonia have usually been depicted in books and films in a negative light. And the crisis centred on the Bronze Soldier has simply deepened that feeling.

I once had the privilege, as member of a literary jury, of reading a number of essays by Russian students in Estonia. I could see a tremendous amount of love and passion for Estonia, but sadly also a whole lot of uncertainty, and a sense of not belonging, not here, not anywhere. There was a great deal of aggression.

I have visited many Russian-language schools and it seemed to be the first time they heard an Estonian tell them, that their country needs them.

\*

Ironically, my grandfather voluntarily joined the Red Army during the Second World War. At the time, it seemed like the only way to save his family. He made it back home from the war in one piece. I have no idea how he felt about the Bronze Soldier, which was erected by Soviet authorities in Estonia shortly after the Second World War, or how he felt about the removal by Estonian authorities of the statue of Peter the First some years after the First World War. Whether one or the other statue represented a hero for him, remains a secret to me. However, as a man who had fought in two wars, I am certain he had the world of respect for all fighting men. Yet, I don’t know what he would have thought about battling over statues.

I don’t believe that he would’ve liked the actions of the Estonian government back then, but surely he would’ve not appreciated the efforts of Russia to once again interfere in the doing of its tiny neighbour.

## **The Russophile Europe and the Russophobe Europe**

**Adrian Severin**

Romanians have always based their identity claims on their double rooted European origins – Rome and Byzantium, promoted their political aims by using the fights and balances among the European rival powers and looked for their security by joining the Occidental alliances. The history taught them that it is better to lose a war on the Occident's side rather than to win one as an ally of Russia, but also that Russia is too big to be isolated and too close to be ignored. They came to the conclusion that unity in general (European unity especially) means power and consequently security, but also that without the American participation, the stability and sustainability in Europe could not be achieved.

All this explains why Romania is enthusiastically committed to the building of a political Europe and it is confident that the trans-Atlantic alliance is crucial for both the European and global equilibrium, while trying to build bridges over the old trenches separating Central and Western Europe from Russia.

Unfortunately this is not the common way of thinking in EU. One could identify within the EU a cleavage between a Russophobe and Russophile policies. The former is usually coupled with an Americanophile orientation while the latter is enrooted in Americanophobia.

The “Russophobe Europe” is usually formed by those countries which were faced for more than one generation the Russian (or Soviet) occupation and rule. Russophobia is also stronger in countries which are geopolitically exposed to Russian aggression. All of them are new member states. The disputes originated in the Soviet / Russian occupation heritage and the threats, originated in the lack of an internationally recognized post-imperial (Soviet) role for Russia make the respective states even more defensive and uncompromising towards Moscow. Institutional fragility and lack of self-confidence charac-





terize the states which only recently regained their independence, reducing their flexibility even further. At the same time the souvenirs of the American leadership in the Cold War, coupled with the present ideological firmness of the US towards the so-called “Russian sovereign democracy” (see state controlled democracy), nourish the strong pro-American orientation of those countries.

On the other side of the continent, the most powerful European nations, relieved of the Soviet danger and feeling the more self-confident the more they think they are the winners of the Cold War, after achieving (at least apparently) the re-unification of Europe, look for getting rid of their former military commander and political tutor, now perceived only as an arrogant, irresponsible, violent and unsophisticated trans-Atlantic rival: the US. Within this process of emancipation those Europeans want to build the united Europe mostly by contrasting it with America. Against this background, Russia – another competitor of the US – looks like a natural ally. This seems to be even more so since the EU is very much dependent on Russia in the strategic field of energy security, while the EU dependence on America for the geo-political security became less evident.

These two opposite trends could divide Europe and make the EU crumble. They could also separate the EU from its American natural ally while jeopardizing the EU Ostpolitik and inducing a conflict with Russia. To cope with these threats the solution lies in the political unification of Europe as a prerequisite for the European economic, social and territorial cohesion. Thus the Eastern members of the EU, becoming more (self) secure, will get rid of their Russian obsessive fears and will be able to shape a more rational neighbourhood policy while the Western members will escape from the narrow logic of their frustrations circumscribed by the trans-Atlantic power asymmetries. This is the best hope for a decent world, able to articulate the Euro-Atlantic, European and Euro-Asiatic structures within a coherent system of global stability. This article could end here but I believe that the continuation is interesting too.

A strategic partnership between EU and Russia is an important goal of the united Europe. In approaching this

matter the EU is caught between loyalty towards the European values and common sense of a pragmatic Ostpolitik.

The prerequisite for a successful Ostpolitik is the settlement of the post-imperial (post-Soviet) status of the Russian Federation within the post-bipolar global order. Such a status depends on the borders of the Russian Federation and the stabilization of the intra-federal relations. On these topics Russia's perception is that the Euro-Atlantic democracies promote: (1). a "push back" strategy consisting of their support for the general recognition of the former internal Soviet borders – arbitrarily established by Stalin and his successors – as international borders; (2). a new "containment" strategy, consisting in their attempt to transform the former Soviet republics, which constitute the immediate neighborhood of Russia, into a sort of "cordon sanitaire"; (3). a destabilizing strategy, by supporting the secessionist agendas in various subjects of the federation.

In this context the crises from Crimea, Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh, to which one should add endless controversies over the political regime of Belarus, are not separate problems but parts of a single and coherent one which should receive a coherent answer in the form of a "package deal".

Once the above prerequisites are properly addressed, the EU will be able to start defining the strategic partnership with Russia in its substance. The main elements of such a partnership might be: (1). a system of regular consultations concerning economic development and market policies; (2). a system of minimal coordination regarding the external action of the EU and Russia; (3). a system of mutual information and cooperation in combating crime; (4). a customs union; (5). a system of mutual assistance in case of calamities; (6). an agreement on the free circulation of capital and on the mutual opening of the financial markets; (7). a non-exclusive energy union; (8). an anti-dumping mechanism (including instruments for combating political manipulation of economic assets and of trade competition); (9). a mechanism of negotiations concerning the circulation of Russian citizens in the EU space and vice-versa (including a regulated access at the





labour markets); and (10). a dispute resolution system, analogue to that of the WTO but extended to non-commercial issues. A Joint EU-Russia Council of Economic and Social Security as well as a Joint EU-Russia Council for Economic Development and Tax Harmonization (aiming to achieve a mutually beneficial equilibrium between the natural resources of Russia and the technological resources of the EU) could be added.

A successful strategic partnership with Russia will not only offer more security and stability to the EU but will also grant new opportunities for a stronger Trans-Atlantic strategic alliance. Within such a strategic triangle (Brussels-Moscow-Washington) a politically United Europe will become more feasible and sustainable.

*Vladimir Putin,  
Prime Minister of the  
Russian Federation*



## The Americanophile Europe and the Americanophobe Europe

**Adrian Severin**

Romania is a European country with an Atlanticist vocation. This is perhaps the geo-political expression of a national double and contradictory fear: the fear of foreign control and the fear of isolation. My country is a synthesis of a culturally organic reality and of a political project developed in the neighbourhood of three empires – the Russian, the Ottoman and the Habsburg.

Romanian geography had a crucial impact on its history. Born in the valleys of the Carpathians, separated among themselves but also collectively protected against the foreign invaders, by those not very high mountains, placed at the crossing point of the ancient silk and amber roads, at the frontier between Europe and Levant, connected to the centre of the continent by the river Danube and acceding to the Planetary Ocean through the opened and warm Black Sea, mixing up the Latin rationalism and the Oriental mystical fervour, the Romanians have always protected their national interests by playing one great power against another. Within this effort they have also learnt that the security guarantees, obtained from a geographically distant power, are less effective, but also, that a protector which is geographically too close is always inclined to impose its own will on its protégé in a hegemonic way. Pushed by the Latin dimension of their culture and by their need for external support to look for allies in the Western Europe, they have also discovered the self-destruction syndrome from which the European actors suffer. To preserve relative equilibrium as a way of preserving the continental peace, America was always asked to intervene.

As a middle-size and medium developed country, Romania needs peace and dynamism in Europe. At war, the smaller you are the more you have to pay, eventually the big ones cutting peace deals at the expense of the small ones. In peace, without dynamism the poor become poorer while the wealthy become even wealthier at the expense of





the weak ones. America was always able to bring Europe both, peace – by rehabilitating its internal geo-political equilibrium – and dynamism – by imposing its spirit of competition and by promoting its taste for change. Therefore for Romanians, the US are a sui generis European power and should remain so.

Within a globalized world and history, America and Europe are able to form an irresistible coalition which could cope successfully with all the opportunities, threats and challenges of the present time, guaranteeing an international order based on the values they could share. “Diminished” at the global level, EU could become a global power together with the US which in their turn has to learn that a single superpower, irrespective of how powerful and resourceful is, could not accomplish alone the role of a global policeman.

One should not speak about any philia or phobia. Both of them are equally bad as foundations for a sound policy. The international policy, to be successful, must start from the correct definition of interests in their context and the right assessment of power relations. A country which experienced the difficulties of struggle for survival understands this well.

Unfortunately, many times, the Americanophiles and the Americanophobians are both led by emotions, misconceptions and prejudices. Thus, the East European Americanophiles love the US because they hate and fear Russia. The latter is perceived as being the main danger to their national resurrection. Obsessed with it, they favour the enlargement of the Atlantic Alliance (NATO) at any cost without noticing that by the accession of new members, which are great security consumers, the security of old members is going to diminish. The West European Americanophilia is enrooted in Euro-scepticism, which includes a Euro-Asian dimension. West Europeans (UK first and foremost) look to the US as their customer for strategic guidance and as their asset for keeping Europe divided and thus unable to be a competitor for their national ambitions (sometimes marked by an imperial nostalgia). They do not understand that America no longer follows their strategic advice but uses them for American global endeavours, whilst Western European national agendas

cannot be promoted , except through and within a strong EU. To be a strong nation in a weak and divided Europe is a suicidal policy. Interestingly enough, all Americanophiles look for the intervention of universal power in order to defend their national independence. It is a misunderstanding which could only remind us that nationalism in Europe meant and still means war.

The Americanophobe group is formed by those (former enemies or allies) who are pushed by the desire for revenge against the humiliations of the former Pax Americana or by those who dream of replacing American hegemony with their own national one. Since they could not succeed alone in such an endeavor, they need a strong Europe (of course, with weak institutions). But Euro-enthusiasm inspired by anti Americanism is wrong and dangerous from the beginning to the end. Here one discovers another paradox: both Americanophobia and Americanophilia originate in nationalism.

It is worth mentioning that the US are themselves guilty for some of the Americanophobic feelings. However, the Europeans should not get happy by noticing that America is a falling superpower which gradually loses its military, economic, cultural and moral superiority. This is not good news for the EU; nor as the weaknesses, quarrels and divisions of the Europeans are not good news for the US. The EU needs a strong, democratic and liberal ally just like the US needs a united, political, efficient Europe. There is room for more transatlantic cooperation and no need for more transatlantic rivalries. By accomplishing its integration homework, the EU could only contribute to a positive development in the US and in the EU-US strategic alliance.



*Adrian Severin,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs,  
and Madeleine Albright,  
US Secretary of State,  
Bucharest 1997*





## Challenging Neighbourhood

**Marek Siwec**

Understanding Europe's approach towards Russia requires a thorough knowledge of Russia's history and, in particular, the history of the Soviet Union. The imperial mentality of the Russian political elites and citizens, which has a significant impact on the shape of this country's foreign policy, has developed over centuries. Despite the fact that there is still a considerable gap between the elites and the rest of society, both share the same imperialistic mindset, which has its roots in the privileged position on the international scene that Russia has enjoyed for the last 100 years. Russia's strength has always been based on territorial expansion and domination over large parts of the world. This policy used to be pursued mainly by military means. Our Eastern neighbour rarely formed alliances. On the contrary, it continued to conquer country after country and to rule over them.

In order to fully understand and adequately analyze the current relations between Russia and Europe, one has to be aware of the difference in Russia's approach towards the European countries that were conquered in the past and those that were not. There is one important exception to this rule - Germany. Germany was conquered by Russia, but due to its current economic power it commands widespread respect across the Russian society.

As far as the perception of Russia across the European continent is concerned, neither Russophobia nor Russophilia is dominant. In every country, certain political forces - namely communist, socialist and social-democratic parties - tend to have a more positive approach towards Russia, and are thus called Russophiles. This attitude is a result of certain positive past experiences since many of these fractions used to benefit from the powerful position of the Soviet Union either in the form of funding or support in their fight against their regimes.

The approach of countries like Poland and the Baltic States - former members of the Warsaw Pact - is full of

distrust and suspicion. They fear that Russia's foreign policy is aimed at re-establishing its power, not necessarily through its military might, but by means of gas and oil. These concerns are quite legitimate and Russia does little to disperse them. On the contrary, it has a strong propensity for proving how useful and effective this "weapon" can be in the current economic and geopolitical reality. For that reason, we have to clearly declare that we are currently working towards opening a new chapter in the mutual relations between Europe and Russia. I would like to emphasize that these bilateral relations constitute a new, as yet undefined, phenomenon on the part of Russia. Nevertheless, its old-time "divide et imperia" policy towards Europe is still very much in place and we will have to deal with it in the future.



*Marek Siwiec with Yulia Tymoshenko during a meeting in the European Parliament in November 2006*





## From American Dream to European Reality

**Marek Siwiec**

Compared to other European countries, Poland has for many years demonstrated a somewhat unusual approach towards the United States of America. This attitude has its roots in our shared historical experiences and the American myth existing in our national consciousness. On the whole, Polish people have a great affection for the Americans due to their support for our struggle for independence at different stages of the complex Polish history. Despite the geographic distance, the history of both countries is inextricably linked through certain figures, such as Tadeusz Kościuszko, Zbigniew Brzeziński, and events, like waves of Polish emigration in the nineteenth century and in the interwar period. Consequently, there has always been a strong bond between the two nations, which translates into the positive perception of the Americans in Poland. This special relation has also been reflected in Poland's policies, which was best exemplified by the recent support given to the American-led invasion on Iraq. The decision concerning the involvement of Polish troops in this mission earned Poland a reputation of the "Trojan Horse of America in Europe".

Nevertheless, these unique historical circumstances and myths have an ever smaller impact on the current relations between the two countries. The bilateral relations of today stem from very specific interests and policies of both nations. This more pragmatic approach has forged a new image of the US in the eyes of the Polish society. The US is still perceived as a "fortress of democracy" but it is no longer a synonym of a "promised land". Fewer and fewer Polish citizens cross the Atlantic Ocean in search of a better life on the American continent. Instead, they emigrate to other European countries where they feel better received and treated. The Polish minority in the US has never managed to become as strong as other national minorities.

The shift in the perception of the United States and its citizens in Poland can also be attributed to purely political

reasons. The issue of the anti-missile defence shield, part of which is supposed to be situated on the Polish territory, is a case in point. A big part of Polish public opinion strongly opposed the location of the American installations in Poland. Similarly, some ethically dubious actions of the American government such as human rights violations in the Guantanamo base, which were widely criticized across Europe, have undermined the authority of the US as a beacon of freedom always committed to democratic values. But, most detrimental to the image of the United States among the Polish public has been its visa policy, in particular granting the right of visa-free travel to our neighbours while maintaining harsh visa requirement for Polish citizens.

All in all, this rather naive approach towards the US and an unconditional support to its policies and actions based on the common historical experience has been gradually replaced by a more pragmatic attitude on the part of Polish political elites and the general public.





## 7. Unity in Diversity

### New Clothes on an Old Country

#### Edit Herczog

Hungary inherited a very strong image from the late eighties of the last century. It took aim at the tourists from the socialist block, especially East Germany, and was based on some simple and easily recognisable stereotypes like 'puszta', 'goulasch', 'csárdás', 'paprika' and the German movie 'Piroschka'.

The picture drawn by these clichés proved to be strong but wrong and – above all – obsolete. To change this image is a challenge for us all: tourist offices, press, media, administration and government. It is a big challenge, but also a great opportunity, to discuss our common values and preferences, to learn about ourselves and argue on symbols and stereotypes, kitsch and art. Hungary rediscovered its own values in the recent years in the course of this process. We are not satisfied with the old ways of eating, drinking and holiday entertainments anymore.

All Hungarians agree that Hungarian cuisine is unique and extremely good. Nevertheless, in the past it could never find a way to breakthrough in the big international trends – mostly because we failed for too long to modernize our cooking methods and to re-build Hungarian cuisine from the basics. But now I am happy to report that we succeeded at last, and Hungarian dishes are ready to conquer the world. Hungarian food is much more than goulash – which is not even a Hungarian word. It is an international name for a food that does not exist in Hungary – the original 'gulyás' is a rich soup (mostly) made in open fires in lazy summer afternoons.

Recently, the renaissance of the culture of wine can be noticed in Hungary. We rediscover our own types of wines, restore the old quality and enjoy the reach flavours. I am afraid that Hungarian wines do not answer the needs of the world market which is too fragmented – but it will be the loss of the world if it will not taste a glass of Hungarian Bikavér or Tokaji.

Beyond cuisine we learned the value of water. Hungary is rich in water for any possible use. Some types of Hungarian mineral water have already collected several awards of the international markets; our thermal bath culture originates from the times of Turkish invasion. Thermal water in Hungary means a huge potential for tourism and medicine: the spirit of spas, wellness and therapy proved to be an integral part of Hungary's self-image lately. It was a wise and good decision to choose Széchenyi Bath as a symbol for Mini-Europe in Brussels to represent our country.

Another strong cliché is the linkage between Hungarians and their horses. We are very proud for that connection, although we also have to admit, that it belongs to the history of the country: the present shows a more metropolitan approach. Though the trotting racecourse was demolished some years ago to give place to a new shopping mall, Budapest organised the first huge National Gallop in 2008 to revive the national tradition of horse riding and to create a new national cultural event with the aim of respect to our past and national characteristics.

What would I show to someone who comes to Hungary the first time? I would bring him to Székesfehérvár, in Fejér shire, where I live. Székesfehérvár was the first capital of Hungary, today it has a beautiful historical centre, but at the meantime its industrial park is a perfect place for international investments. It is a lovely town cuddled up by a nature reserve area with an excellent location: it is between the Lake Balaton and Budapest, you can find many different entertainment and beauties in a short distance, mountains, spas, lovely villages, old castles, vineyards. It is a nice place to visit and the best place to stay - to spend a whole life there.





## Nature - Number One for Finns

### Riitta Myller

Two Finnish friends were visiting London at the time of the Second World War. As the Finnish way goes, they had stayed up long and drunk plenty of alcohol the previous night. In the morning the other looks out of the hotel window: all the buildings nearby are in ruins. The distraught man wakes up his friend: “Listen, yesterday will cost us dearly.”

This joke causes great amusement in neighbouring Sweden and Norway. It surely makes the Finns laugh as well, for the drinking part. But not for the part about the war. The combination of booze and Finns is a source of jokes in our Southern neighbour Estonia too. Above all the

*Summer evening in  
North Karelia*



Finns are keen on laughing at the expense of the Swedes. Even small children know the name of the thinnest book in the world: The Swedish Wartime Achievements. Jokes about the Russians have nearly disappeared since the Soviet times.

The Finns have always compared themselves to the Swedes. In the decades following the wars, higher living standards of the neighbour was a source of admiration – and of envy. Sweden has been seen as the ‘Lucky Duck’ of Scandinavia and the Finns have felt themselves inferior to the Swedes. Sweden, on the contrary, has had the view of Finland as the little brother. Things are different now. We have been able to get rid of our inferiority complex, as Finland has prospered and become a member of the European Union. The joke goes that Finland became a part of Europe by joining the EU, whereas the Swedes think the EU joined Sweden. With hindsight you can say the Finns were more prepared for EU cooperation than the Swedes.



*Winter view by a lake*





Finland, on the other hand, has treated Estonia as the little brother. For example, the Southern neighbours are readily given advice concerning relations with Russia. Estonia is the most popular travel destination among Finns, and dozens of ships head there daily. The rapid emergence of Estonia from the distress of the Soviet times has not gone unnoticed in Finland; the past feeling of superiority is gone.

Finland is the second most popular travel destination for Russians, following China. The attitude toward Russians has changed greatly. In the old days you could see a notice on the shop wall, stating in Russian: Only one Russian customer at a time. After that time the stores have hired plenty of Russian-speaking staff, especially in Eastern Finland.

Until the 1990s the Finns frequently travelled to Russia and the interaction with Russians was intense. This has, however, declined remarkably. The studying of Russian has slumped. The studying of Swedish, the second official language in Finland, does not inspire the Finns either, after Swedish was removed from the group of obligatory subjects in the upper secondary school final examinations.

The Finns are very interested in what ‘the others’ think about them. The general perception is that the national self-esteem has improved after the membership of the EU. Other research results also confirm the Finns have a strong national identity. According to European Social Survey the Finns are the second happiest people in Europe, after the Danes. The Finns’ happiness derives from family, friends, work, making a living and nature.

The Finns have a particularly close relationship with nature. The Finnish dream is to have a summer cottage beside a lake. There are already half a million summer cottages. You go to your summer cottage to be in peace, to bathe in the sauna and to swim naked. The legal concept of everyman’s right is a Finnish speciality. This means that everyone may hike and roam in the countryside, collect wild berries, flowers and mushrooms without needing to ask for permission.

In the winter of 2008 the *Trendi* magazine asked its readers what they thought is best about Finland. Clean nature was number one, and the readers emphasised the importance of the four seasons. Safety came second and

the Finnish people third. Foreigners often pay attention to the drunkards in Finland. Alcohol consumption has steadily risen and the side effects of alcohol use and alcohol-related deaths have also increased. In per capita terms, the Finns drink the same as the EU average. However, the Finns drink to get drunk. Being quiet is normal for Finns – but not when they are drunk. On the other hand Finns are viewed as honest – what is promised will be kept. Some find this quality close to being naïve. Personally I see it as one of our best qualities and I do not want it to be weakened by the mix of cultures.

I am a true Finn in the sense that I always want to introduce my guests to the best what nature has to offer: being able to move peacefully in the forest, on the slopes of the sharp-edged hills, ‘vaarat’ and beside the lakes. I surely want the education system, the achievements of the Nordic welfare state and the cultural know-how to be introduced as well.



*Canoeing in North Karelia*





## **A Dreamy Country at a Historical Crossroad**

### **Justas Paleckis**

If you were to ask a Lithuanian on the street what his country is famous for, he would most likely blurt out without too much hesitation: basketball, beautiful women, and beer. If such a question would be given to someone who is more inclined towards intellectual matters, then he might say the long history of statehood and contemporary theatre.

In fact, after Lithuania won the European Basketball Championship in 1937 and 1939, this branch of sports became the number one national sport. Not long ago we repeated this feat and won the European championships and we can pride ourselves with the bronze medals at the Olympics. Beer is a matter of taste and as for the beautiful women that have not yet left for places like the UK, Ireland or Spain, luckily there are still many that have chosen to stay in Lithuania.

Each nation takes pride in their history. Over 600 years ago the Grand Duchy of Lithuania joined lands together where now Belarusians, Ukrainians and Russians live. Stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea, the Duchy had a territory of over a million square kilometres and was the most powerful state in Eastern and Central Europe. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania distinguished itself by its ethnic and religious tolerance, its Statute (composed of laws) and for being progressive for its time. Lithuanians were the last pagans in Europe, withstanding the Teutonic Order and being Christianised only in 1387. And those who are interested in theatre, whether they be from Italy, Russia, Poland or Germany would know, I believe, the name of at least one contemporary Lithuanian director.

Located at a historical crossroads, Lithuania for many centuries was crossed by European trading and military routes. When times are turbulent, with wars looming and breaking out, such a place is a curse: Regiments of Teutonic Knights, Russians, Poles, Swedes, French and Germans rolled across the country a number of times and laid waste

to it. This is why when peace and cooperation are in effect, Lithuania does well.

Lithuanians consider themselves as a part of Central Europe and feel a historical link with Poles, Czechs and Hungarians but, above all, we are a Baltic country. Lithuanians feel closest to their blood brothers the Latvians. The fact that Lithuanian and Latvian belong to the Baltic language family, binds us together. Though we are not able to talk to one another unless we have the help of an interpreter, there are many words that sound similar. Lithuanian is an archaic language and the closest to Sanskrit of all of the living European languages, which is why Lithuanian is studied by a number of linguists at universities all over the world. Estonians are farther away in terms of language and their closeness to Scandinavia, but we consider them to be cousins: our historical fate has been similar for almost 200 years. From our Baltic neighbours, we like to poke fun at their slower reaction, which is more a false perception. We have not yet been able to learn and adapt those things that allow them to outpace us.

There are two more neighbouring nations, a sizable Poland and a gigantic Russia. We have old issues with both, spiced-up by a love-hate relationship that links us, a hate with a dash of love, or its opposite. For a few centuries we existed with Poland in a common state, known in Polish as the Rzeczpospolita. Some attempt to claim it as a prototype of the European Union. However, gradually, the influence of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania weakened within the Commonwealth of Two Nations, as it was also known, and Vilnius began to listen more and more to Warsaw, and the Lithuanian noble class became Polanized. The final result was that both nations ended up under the power of Tsarist Russia. With the fall of the Russian and German Empires, a miracle occurred – the Lithuanian state re-established itself, and fought off the attacks of its neighbours. However in the interwar period, Lithuania experienced the painful loss of its capital, as Poland, which considered Vilnius to be a Polish city, captured it. An even greater blow occurred in 1940, when Lithuania was annexed by the Soviet Union, and Lithuanians lamented under their breath: Vilnius is ours, but we are Russia's...





*Trakai island castle -  
a thrilling tourist attraction  
in Lithuania*

Now our relations with Poland are superb. With Russia, the situation is more complex owing to both its growing strength and its assessments of the past. However Lithuanians are friendly towards these neighbouring nations and those from these countries that are Lithuanian citizens (in our country 7% of the inhabitants are of Polish descent and 6% are of Russian descent). Surveys show that only 15% of Lithuanians would not like to have a Pole as a neighbour, and only 9% who would not like to have a Russian as a neighbour. If these numbers seem large to some, I would like to add that a number of those asked would not like to have a Lithuanian as a neighbour.

Lithuanians are not afraid of making light of their own faults, especially their envy. It is said that the best news for a Lithuanian is that the neighbour's cow has died. Within the four Lithuanian regions, which are distinguished by different dialects and traditions, inhabitants also have their own character traits. Those from the Western region of Žemaitija are stubborn and persistent, those from the



North-Eastern Aukštaitija region are modest and hard-working, while those from the Southern region of Suvalkija are good hosts but very frugal, and those from the South-Eastern region of Dzūkija are open and wear their feelings on their sleeves. There is an opinion dominating among our neighbours that Lithuanians are hard-working and hospitable.

If a friend of mine were going to Lithuania for the first time and would only have one day there, I would first of all suggest to him to go to the Vilnius Old Town. The labyrinth of small streets and alleys among the green hills, where a new space suddenly unfurls and the towers of churches ascend to the sky. We would go to Trakai, where a castle on an island has been rebuilt while preserving its authentic structure and where the dreamy, winding lakes provide pure delight.

And if we had another day or two, we would go through Kaunas to the seaside. Nida is a fairytale of sand dunes between the lagoon and the sea, the spa resort of Palanga, which can be noisy in some places, and quiet and romantic in others, and Klaipėda, which preserves its German and Lithuanian past. And if we would have time for another trip to the other side of Lithuania, we would go to Aukštaitija National Park, which is an encounter with pure nature, where you can find forests that are centuries old, clear lakes, and rolling hills.





## Troubled History

### Marek Siwiec

Speaking about the special features of one's country is always tricky because we all tend to think that our country is unique. Indeed, each state has some distinct characteristics and arguing which country is more extraordinary usually leads to a dead-end.

On numerous occasions I have hosted in Warsaw many guests, both from the East and the West. Most of the visitors already have a general knowledge about Poland and its history. Yet, in order to help them better understand the peculiarities of my country and its capital, I take my guests for a city tour to the most important monuments of Warsaw. The conclusions stemming from this tour are not always obvious, even though the facts remain the same.

The first sites of this trip are the Monument of the Warsaw Uprising and the Little Insurgent statue. They both represent the heroism of Warsaw citizens of all ages who fought against the Fascist occupation of Poland towards the end of World War II. As a result of the Warsaw Uprising, the city was completely destroyed while the Red Army, which stationed on the other side of the Vistula River, did nothing to support the insurgents and prevent the bloodshed.

There is another important memorial - the Monument of the Heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto, without which the history of Warsaw would be incomplete. It is impossible to know Poland and its history without understanding what the Warsaw Ghetto was, how many Jews lived in Warsaw and in Poland before the Second World War, how much the Jewish community enriched Polish social and cultural life. If I have more time, I take my guests to the Jewish Historical Institute, where they can discover the flourishing life of the Polish Jews before World War II.

In the vicinity of the Institute there is a Monument to the Murdered and Killed in the East - the wagon and the crosses which pay tribute to the millions of people killed in inhuman conditions in Siberia and other places of exile. It symbolizes the tragedy that many Polish families went

through and have to deal with until today. The last place I take my guests to is the grave of father Jerzy Popiełuszko - the famous Catholic priest associated with the Solidarity movement, who was murdered by the Soviet-operated communist internal intelligence agents. This figure represents the tragic but victorious aspects of the recent history of Poland, heroism which was confronted with crime.

This is the general image of my city, country and nation. This is also the heritage with which Poland wants to enrich the common European history.



*Symbolic grave commemorating Warsaw Uprising*





## 8. The Fateful 20 Years

### **The Political Development of Hungary since 1988 - Political, Economic, Social Achievements and Losses**

Edit Herczog

In the late eighties the Hungarian political transition suited the changes in world politics. Thus, without understanding the international aspects, we cannot catch up with the Hungarian events: the political and ideological opening and the economic reconstruction, initiated by Michael Gorbachev, the changes in the Soviet-American relations, the events in Poland, the Western German political ambitions and the reunification of Germany together with the opening of the borders by Gyula Horn, our later Prime Minister had a strong effect on Hungary; effect on its political and economic institutions and on its society, as a whole.

According to Ralf Dahrendorf, the great sociologist and philosopher of the twentieth century 'a constitutional reform may take a mere six months, the economic reform six years, but sixty years are barely enough to lay the social foundations required.' Therefore, the political transition of 1990 in Hungary cannot be examined only as an introduction of political pluralism and of free elections. It was a complex process which also transformed the social institutions: some of the old ones ceased to exist, new ones were established, and the remaining ones were about to alter.

Studying the transition with the eyes of the decision-makers of that period it might be concluded that the political transition of 1989/1990 had at least as big an impact on Hungary as any other big revolution before. Though, the constitutional state of the country remained stable, and a new world was created whose constitutional principles are still strong and define the basis of the state. The political transition in Hungary was determined and

circumscribed by public law, and the reconstruction of the state institutions was regulated by the laws made by the National Assembly. After the formation of the Constitutional Court in 1990 the transition was carried through within the confines of a constitutional state. Under these circumstances, several parties started to compete for power, ones who mainly still exist today. But there is a special characteristic of the parties, that they were and they still are 'rainbow parties': as time passed some of them were redefined and restructured but the members remained the same, they are colourful like a rainbow.

In 1992 Hungary entered first the Council of Europe among the newly 'independent states', and started negotiations with the European Union in 1994. But the economic transition of the country did not happen so smoothly. After surviving severe financial crisis in the nineties, Hungarian economy did not have better results in the first part of the new decade either. Even in 2006 the budget deficit reached the level of 10%, though since then there is a remarkable turnaround in the public finances,



*Women in SMEs*





with the budget of deficit falling to just 5.7% of GDP in 2007. Yet with the government having only limited scope to cut taxes, people might feel that Hungary could find itself a low-growth, low-deficit economy for the next few years. We can say that to start the programmes and different development processes the government had a significant role, but the result was achieved by the dynamism of the spontaneous social processes.

Compared to the pace and the depth of the political and economic changes, the social transition is a going to be a longer and harder process. The evaluation of the transition is more negative in my country than in some of the neighbouring satellite countries, people in Hungary were more disappointed. The sense of loss in people was bigger because there was a huge difference between their expectations and the real tendencies they experienced. As the statistics said it was not only the usual pessimism of the Hungarians. On one hand, they appreciated the newly gained power of political freedom, but on the other hand, they lost their belief in political institutions as they could not regain the sense of security and as governmental politics and politicians did not find the right answers on people's biggest concerns like the new situations, new difficulties, and new necessities, they gradually lost their trust in the future, too.

Let's hope that Dahrendorf was right and we only need some more time in Hungary to complete the transition both economically and socially.

## Restoring Independence for the Second Time

### Justas Paleckis

Lithuania is probably the only nation in Europe and the world, which re-established her independence in the 20th century twice, in both 1918 and 1990. We strongly believe, that we will not need a third time. Of course, there is a small group of politicians in Lithuania who are certain that we once again lost our independence after Lithuania joined the EU in 2004. Well, even such ridiculous opinions are not frightening in a democracy!

I would say that the main triumph in the last 20 years is freedom, the creation of a constitutional state, and the implementation of human rights. Unfortunately, we have yet to achieve a level where most of the state's citizens are able to live respectably without being plagued by worries about survival, the large inequality still present and the social gap.

The role of democracy's watchdog is being carried out successfully by the media, revealing abusive practices, corruption, and improper behaviour of those intoxicated with power or money. According to data from Freedom House, Lithuania is among those countries, where freedom of the press is not restricted at all (which cannot be said for all old members of the EU). On the other hand it is true that the so-called 4th branch almost feels like it is the 1st branch, able to have crucial influence on the governance of the state.

Another heady victory, which about 20 years ago we couldn't have even dreamt about, is that Lithuania would be a member of the European Union and NATO! The citizens of my country are the most satisfied with membership, compared to other EU countries of the 21st century. This admiration for the EU could be explained by the funding coming from Brussels, the freedom to study and work in other countries, and to travel (which of course depends on the size of your wallet). I would like to underline that one needs to think not only about money from Europe. Even more important, is to draw on its





wisdom, knowledge and especially the traditions of dignity and integrity that are observed there.

It is said in Lithuania, that there is nothing bad that won't end up well. The opposite also holds true. One of the main freedoms of the EU, which is the freedom of movement, put about half a million people "on the move" from Lithuania, mostly young, energetic and educated people. They found a better salary in the UK, Ireland, Spain or in another EU country, while in Lithuania the level of unemployment dropped and a lack of workers was felt. Now, as the crisis became full-blown, the unemployment rate has risen and some of those who emigrated have returned.

Demographic problems are being exacerbated by a falling birth rate and short lifespan. Statistically, one retired person is supported by 2.5 working people. Despite the horrible losses during the war and post-war years, the number of Lithuanians in Lithuania after the Second World War grew at a steady rate, but starting in 1991 these numbers started to decline.

We can be proud of the fact, that Lithuanians foster a positive attitude towards improving themselves and studying. The number of those with a higher education in my country is double that of the EU average. Lithuania is famous for its doctors, strong clinics and unprecedented operations done in Vilnius and Kaunas. It is not only Lithuanians who leave to work in EU countries and come back for medical treatment in their home country. More and more citizens of other EU countries are coming to Lithuania for operations, rehabilitation and treatment. In the competition for the main spa towns are the seaside town of Palanga as well as Druskininkai, famous for its mineral spring, located near the River Nemunas. The latter has stormed ahead in this race. Druskininkai, like no other city, managed to optimally use EU funds and modernise many spas, treatment complexes, hotels and built the most wonderful aqua park in Central and Eastern Europe.

If a large part of country's potential is accumulated in the capital of many EU countries, then the strength of Lithuania for a long time already has been its regions and "small capitals." Kaunas competes with Vilnius, the port of Klaipėda is gaining muscle in the Baltic Sea, and let's

not forget Šiauliai, Panevėžys, Marijampolė, Alytus plus another 5-6 regional centres.

There is no tension between the various ethnicities living in Lithuania. I would like to remind the reader that in our country 82% of citizens are of Lithuanian, 7% of Polish and 6% of Russian origin. There were no limitations for receiving Lithuanian citizenship when we became independent. There are not only ethnic communities representing the largest groups, but also Belarusians, Ukrainians and Jews among others. They have their own schools and print their own newspapers. All the inhabitants of Lithuania (with the exception of some older citizens) know Lithuanian well. Approximately 60% of our citizens speak Russian, 25% English and 20% Polish or German.

The last decade of the last century was particularly hard for the three Baltic countries, unlike for the other new EU members, due to the breaking off of ties with the East and



*Nida is a fairytale of sand dunes between the lagoon and the sea*





the necessity to re-orient themselves towards the West. In Lithuania, the level of GDP of 1990 was only achieved again in 2006. However it was a totally different level – the products were neither being stored in warehouses, nor going to the Eastern closed market of poor quality products, but were competing in the world market.

Since 2000, when Lithuanian law was brought into line more and more with EU directives, a sudden economic rise began: we experienced annual GDP growth of 7%-10% with inflation fluctuating from 0% to 3%. These great results were mostly based on the growing consumption in the internal market and a re-invigorated construction sector after a long stagnation. Cataclysms in the world financial market and jumps in raw energy and food prices capped growth at 3% in 2008. However the landing after the economic boom was softer in Lithuania than in other Baltic countries.

## **A Changing Romania in a Changing Europe**

### **Adrian Severin**

Romania has undertaken major changes after 1989, when the communist regime collapsed. Its transition, from a totalitarian communist system, planned economy and closed society to a democracy with a functional free-market and open society, was a slow and difficult process, which was characteristic to all the countries in this region.

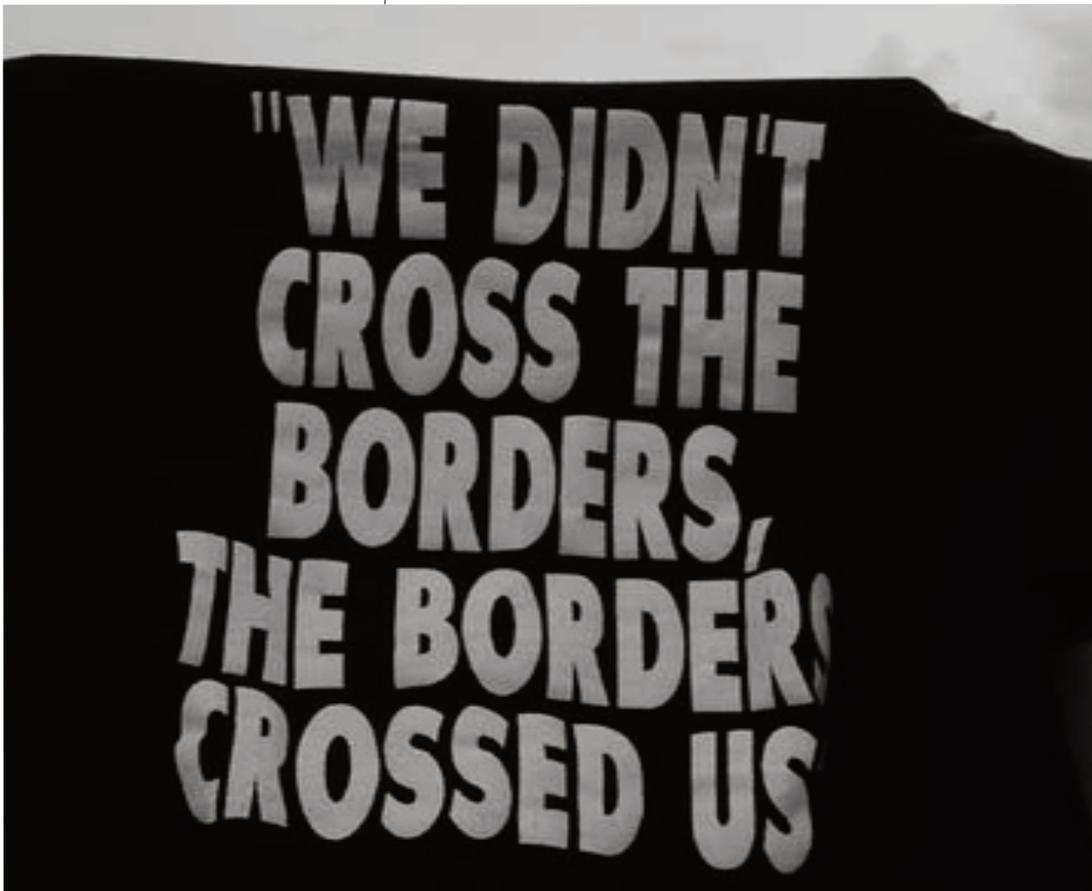
In the political realm, the one-party rule and supremacy was quickly replaced by a pluralist system, which was one of the first measures of the new provisional government. Thus, after many years of opposition repression, it was a natural tendency for a multitude of parties to emerge, representing several orientations existing in the society. The period of accommodation was short, however, once it became clear that the new political forces did not benefit from a sufficient expertise to govern the country, even if some of them pretended to continue the interwar tradition of some political forces.

The National Salvation Front (FSN) emerged as the main political force legitimised by the administration of the country after the 1989 Revolution. As many claim, the FSN was neither a reformed communist party nor a non-reformed communist one, ruling in a post-communist environment. The Romanian Communist Party collapsed in the first moments of the popular riot against the totalitarian regime and vanished. Small heirs were to appear much later in order to disappear again after a short and insignificant political career. The FSN was not even a party (at least at its beginnings) but a state of spirit, a popular mood legitimised with the technocratic skills of its members, most of whom came from the old regime establishment and were able to administer rather than change. When a reformist group emerged from that political movement with a minced ideological dimension, the FSN split, thus giving birth to several parties which were to become the mainstream political players in the Romanian post transition.





Presently, the left is embodied by the Social Democratic Party (PSD), born after the fusion of the social democrat and socialist currents of the former FSN with the historical Romanian Social Democratic Party (PSDR), while the right wing is represented by the National Liberal Party and the Democratic Liberal Party (PD-L); the latter was created around a group of politicians which were also former FSN leaders. There are also some parties representing ethnic groups, most notably the Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania (UDMR), which even began to be represented in the government after 1996. The “ethnic” party of the majority, i.e. best known party of the nationalist forces is the Greater Romania Party (PRM). It was the most significant far right party for years but its influence decreased rapidly after 2000. On its traces new parties of the same nature emerge with an importance yet to be established.



One of the most outstanding features of the political evolution in Romania was the fact that all political forces supported NATO and EU accession. This is in line with the Romanian traditions of geo-political and not ethnic nationalism. There was thus no question about another alternative for the country and this contributed to a successful bid for the country in the two international structures. Another important element was the presence of national minorities' representatives in the parliament and in the government (especially UDMR and Roma). Thus a nationalist confrontational approach such as in the former Yugoslavia was avoided.

The economic field was nevertheless a witness to the most dramatic changes. The industrial field, which began to find no use for its gigantic enterprises in the new economic setting of the 90s, had to be restructured. This meant closing many factories and creating a large mass of unemployed people, sometimes involving social troubles (especially in the case of miners). The solution to employing this huge population segment was found after 2002, when Romanian citizens were free to travel abroad and thus found new opportunities within EU countries in need of additional workforce (Italy, Spain, etc.).

In the agricultural field, the reform meant re-establishing private property over the land. However, this created more problems than solutions. The fragmentation of land exploitations made them unsustainable and did not help to improve living conditions in rural areas. Eventually, peasants had to sell and, sometimes, also move out of the countryside in search of jobs in urban (and some rural) areas of the EU. This has boosted the real estate sector, which is now replacing the old crop lands. Unfortunately, this has transformed Romania from the main source of agriculture exports in the past, into the major import country for such products. It is also true, however, that food industries have prospered under the impact of foreign investments. Other sectors of the economy recovered, too, such as car, electronics, pharmaceutical, textile, wood, energy and oil refining industries.

Nonetheless, the transport infrastructure is still lagging behind; the tourism industry is still not sufficiently





developed, in spite of numerous existing sites, whilst services sector is still developing in order to cover all existing needs.

The multiple changes occurring in the society had a great impact over the social development of the country. The economic changes producing unemployment have led to increasing immigration. This was partly a result of the slow improvement in living standards. Sometimes, Romanian communities abroad were not so welcome as were previously thought, creating anachronistic and nationalistic impulses in the host countries.

Inflation was also a main concern, especially during the 90's, creating general "fear of rising prices" among the population. On the other hand, cheap labour was exploited by foreign companies which opened factories here. In spite of creating jobs, these were often low-paid and did not make a significant impact on living standards. Thus, instead of terrorism or global warming Romanians are more worried about prices and economic welfare (most of the time only preoccupied with survival).

The pension system was another matter of concern. Since the number of retired people is increasing and the labour force is shrinking, the system became unsustainable. The solution was the introduction of privately administered pension funds, which would create better perspectives for the future. But for now, the retired are one of the poorest segments of society and as such can easily become the object of for political manoeuvre of interested populist politicians.

Romania is today the seventh largest country of the European Union in terms of population. It is both the smallest of the big European countries and the largest of the small. Today it has one of the highest rates of economic growth in Europe which was sustained already for ten years. The level of unemployment is low and the inflation is under control. The Romanian market is considered to be the most attractive in the Eastern parts of the EU. However, the living standards are still low and the social polarization is high. This polarization is more problematic than poverty. Against this background, for Romanians it is clear that for a better future they need a strong Romania in a strong EU. This is a dialectic unity for which they must work.

## A glass half-full

**Marek Siwiec**

The subject of the political development of Poland since 1989 has been widely discussed and analyzed worldwide due to the fact that many actors on the international scene witnessed or participated in the process of transformation of the centrally-planned economy to the free market. We went through this process in compliance with the recommendations of wise people. We managed to eliminate the paranoia of the communist economy and politics, which was dominated by one party. Today, the key question is "What have we built instead"? As always, the answer depends on the perspective. The glass might be seen as half-full considering the abundance and variety of products in the supermarkets, higher salaries and the general prosperity of society. However, the glass might also be viewed as half-empty given the areas of structural poverty, the second generation struggling with unemployment and the lack of hope resulting from the fact that, try as they might, many people do not succeed.

The overall picture of the Polish society emerging from the statistics is very optimistic. But when I look at the individuals and families in my constituency - Wielkopolska region - the situation is completely different. In this context it is crucial to give people hope for a better future for themselves and their children. This can and should be achieved by a better access to education and its higher quality.

In my view, the greatest failure of the whole transformation process since 1989 has been the unsuccessful privatisation of state-owned property. As a result, we have missed the opportunity to use it for the benefit of the society as a whole. I am not against privatisation as such, but I do not believe that it constitutes a universal remedy for all problems.



*During celebrations  
of 50th anniversary  
of the EU in Poznan*





## 9. EU - Hope for the World

### An Experiment that Turned into a Reality and Hope

#### Justas Paleckis

I was once a witness to a situation where a parliamentarian from one of the new EU Member States attacked Jose Manuel Barroso in Brussels, saying “All empires fall. At some point the Roman Empire and Ottoman Empires crumbled and later those of Napoleon, the British, as did that of the USSR before our eyes. The same fate awaits the European Union!” The President of the European Commission answered back that the EU certainly cannot be compared to the British Empire, nor even more with the Soviet Union for that matter!

No, the European Union is not an empire. Empires were put together with the shield and a sword, and their existence and expansion were not possible without conquests. Russian poet Pyotr Vyazemsky said, that a giant dies when it stops growing. Empires are simply fated to expand or, after they stop expanding and their military might weakens, are relegated to doom. Some giant empires truly did exhibit a certain amount of progress on the path of humanity. However, smaller nations and states not only were loveless to these giants, but feared and even hated them.

The European Union is not an empire simply by the fact that there are no military might, conquests and annexations that unite it. It is an experiment, built on the ruins of the Second World War, striving to avoid new wars and same ruins. The experiment proved itself worthy. It was at that time the economic interest appeared for tearing down trade barriers and walls, creating a common market, and at the same time improving lives of all EU citizens.

Regardless of how civilised and modern an empire is, conquered nations struggle to break free from it; whereas more and more nations and states want to join the European Union. Countries of North and South America, Asia and Africa are creating unions of cooperation based on the EU example.

The speciality of the EU comes to the forefront, if we stop to think about the future.

When nuclear weapons appeared, for the first time humanity came face to face with fate: to be or not to be. Since that time the possible threats to destroy our world have grown dramatically. Terrorism is one of them: let us imagine those bent on suicide with nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction in their hands. No less horrible scenarios arise concerning the destruction of our environment: global warming, ecological catastrophes, hurricanes and floods. Unfortunately, the social divide in the world is growing – both among the richest and poorest countries, and between the wealthiest and poorest people. Two percent of the world's population possess more than half the world's wealth, while hundreds of thousands die of starvation, water shortages and infectious diseases.

The biggest threat lingering over all of these dangers is the spiritual fall of a person, when the power of money becomes uncontrollable, when no limits or taboos remain, owing to an insane desire to accumulate wealth, luxury and pleasure, or fanatical political or religious beliefs.

The European Union provides hope. The EU countries do not fight amongst themselves. The EU supports the reduction of a huge burden of unimaginable arms races which total a thousand billion dollars. Help for the poorest countries, which even for rich countries wanting to serve their own interests is necessary for protecting the planet from wars, conflicts and influxes of migrants, only comprises a tenth of this sum. The European Union clearly leads the way in providing this kind of support, surpassing rich countries like the US and Japan. This situation is the same in the fight against climate change and the extinction of nature. The obligations taken on by the European Union have become an example for other countries. If the US, China, India and other countries will not follow, the world will simply suffocate: humanity would need four planets to reach the same level of consumerism that the US has. And the bridging of the social divide by the EU shows the way. The socialist EU model, distinguishing itself under the influence of Social Democratic ideas, comprises a counterbalance to the liberal American model. In the European Union, the gap between the rich and those with





*Hopefully they will live in  
an even better Europe*

the least is smaller than on other continents.

The EU established itself and grew stronger in the ruins of the post-war period. No one wants the above-mentioned threats, or perhaps new ones that are surfacing, to destroy a part of humanity or even all of it. And only then those few remaining individuals would come to their senses, and in the ruins of the desert once again start hard, exhaustive road towards a better world.

The European Union is not a perfect work of art and is not an example one can follow in all cases. After all it is a road towards the unknown, towards what has not yet existed in the world, is unavoidably fossilised, full of potholes and barriers.

However, if the European Union crumbles, the chance that humanity will find itself at the edge of catastrophe becomes all the more real.



## The United States of Europe

### Adrian Severin

For Romanians, the European Union accession represents the end of the “national” stage of their history and the beginning of the “post-national” or “trans-national” one. This is not only an unavoidable process, as seen from the heights of the universal history, but a necessary one from a purely Romanian perspective. Likewise, this does not mean to abandon national ideals but rather to accomplish them. Indeed, with a lot of effort, Romanians were able to establish a more or less successful nation-state. Maybe they could have done more; maybe that was all they could have done bearing in mind the general historical context. However, in a global world Romania is objectively “diminished”, as all European countries are. It could only grow and it could only plug the gap of development and wealth which separates it from the most developed ones, within and through a united Europe, a European federation of nation-states. Thus Europe will become meaningful at the global level as well. Otherwise Romania will lag behind other European states even more and will be pushed back to the old dictatorial experiences; while Europe itself will become, at the world level, parochial, divided and powerless. Eventually this means war again, and for Romania, defeat again.

These ideas are not necessarily promoted by all Romanians or by all Romanian political elite but, at least, they are not rejected. The general positive approach to such ideas could be explained by the traditional geo-political character of Romanian nationalism and the tolerant (one could say “aristocratic”) nature of Romanian culture.

Today’s main challenge is not the enlargement of the present European Union, but rather making a better use of the opportunities for re-uniting Europe by building up an entity capable of reconciling its history with its geography, accommodating flexibility with predictability, efficiency with legitimacy, diversity with solidarity, freedom with security. All this requires the European Union to acquire a





federal organization and federal-type powers in such fields as economy, social welfare and foreign policy, which are essential in providing cohesion criteria required by an emerging “cosmopolitan European nation”: security, dignity, prosperity. (Freedom exists and is guaranteed by each and all three of them).

It should be noted that today’s “unitary nation-state” is not similar to the one belonging to the past century. Being national does not mean being ethnic or functioning on ethnic foundations (as it was established when the European empires broke up and when the principle of self-determination followed the criterion of an ethnic majority inhabiting a certain territory). Being unitary does not mean being centralist. The nation-state is not an ethnic entity, neither does it have an ethnic identity; it is civic and, usually, multi-cultural. (Romanians were first a culture – a cultural nation – in search of statehood. In 1918 Greater Romania was inevitably perceived as a state belonging to the Romanians. In 2009, it can only be a state of the Romanian citizens, irrespective of their ethnicity). On the



other hand, under the circumstances of globalization, the nation-state alone can no longer succeed in providing security – individual and collective, national and international – and that is why there is no other way but to exercise sovereignty jointly, alongside the others. In turn, Europe will not be able to play a leading role in its competition with global players unless the states of the European nation get united. Failing that, a second-hand continent will be inhabited by third-hand nations. This will be reflected negatively in the life of each and every nation of the continent. That is the reason why a political Europe is needed, with federal features. Such a Europe will be made up – there is no other possible way – of the present nation-states and consequently, the only possible federation would be a federation of nation-states.

The idea that federalism could be replaced by intergovernmentalism is an illusion. With intergovernmentalism the legal sovereign equality between economically, militarily and, consequently, politically unequal states makes only room for eventual submission of the interests of the weak to the interests of the powerful. In a long run this means (at best) the former's marginalization in structural misery and at the worst their assimilation and disappearance.

In the mid 19th century, when the star of nations was rising onto the European sky, the Romanians used to say that Union is strength. The strength of all together and the strength of each individual in turn. Such truth, which was confirmed by subsequent events, is still valid today, in the context of globalization, with the only difference that this now concerns the whole of Europe. That is United Europe; the United States of Europe!





## Quo Vadis Europe?

### Marek Siwec

If someone was able to predict the future of the EU, he or she could probably win the Nobel Prize in several categories, ranging from economics, through literature, to the Nobel Peace Prize. The European Union is a truly sui generis entity with no precedent in the history of political science and international affairs. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to envisage its future shape. The history of the EU has been shaped to a great extent by the trial and error method. Some ideas have worked, others failed. Some initiatives had to be realized immediately, others could or had to be postponed. The European Communities were created by great visionaries, who aimed at uniting the

*Orange revolution in Ukraine*



Continent to prevent another war from occurring. Over the years, a more pragmatic approach to the idea of the European integration has evolved, with ideologists being gradually replaced by realists and politicians.

In my opinion, the EU will never become a super-state or a centralised federation of European countries. Its member states and nations will never be ready or willing to give up their sovereignty or identity. I am confident, however, that the future of the EU will be marked by a further transfer of the national competences to the European level, resulting in an ever closer cooperation and more effective European policies. I also hope that we will witness an increasing involvement of citizens and nations in the process of the European integration. Indeed, the participation of citizens and the question of the European identity are the two issues that I am mostly concerned about with regard to the future of the EU. A further transfer of the decision-making powers to the European institutions requires greater democratic legitimacy articulated by a more active engagement and deeper interest in the European affairs on the part of ordinary people. Instead, today most European societies seem to be schizophrenic, ignorant and suspicious when it comes to the decisions made at the EU level. When asked to express their views on any European project that may imply a limitation of their national sovereignty, the EU citizens say "no". Rarely do they realize, however, that their "no" - as in the case of the Irish referendum on the Lisbon Treaty - in practical terms signifies a weaker Europe, which easily translates into less money and less prosperity for individual member states and, consequently, for their citizens.

With regard to social communication, the present European political elites seem to be stuck in the twentieth, if not the nineteenth, century. They still communicate with their citizens mostly through their party spokesmen and the media. They tend to provide very scarce and general information without getting to the bottom of the most difficult and pressing issues on their political agenda. As a result, half a billion Europeans without a better access to information simply refuse to participate in the European politics. That, in turn, leaves a lot of room for demagoguery and populism. Thus, the responsibility for the current crisis,





or what many observers refer to as a "European fatigue", mostly lies with the European political elites. Even though this statement does not seem to be immediately obvious to everyone, a serious debate on this difficult issue will have to be launched and lead to some constructive conclusions.

In this context, Poland is not different. On the contrary, it is a textbook example of what populism and demagoguery can do. In the campaign preceding the accession referendum, the right-wing, populist politicians shamelessly exploited the numerous fears and doubts of the Polish society. In the aftermath of the EU enlargement, they cynically took advantage of the benefits that the EU membership had brought and continue to do so.



## THE AUTHORS



## Edit Herczog

I was born on 5 May 1961 in Budapest. With my husband, Dr. Péter Szeredi, historian we breed three children in Csákvár where I grew up. As for my qualification, I am wine-expert and Russian special translator; later I graduated at the University of Science of Budapest on the Department of Portuguese Language and Literature in 1994 followed by an absolatory at the European Business School. Starting from 1994 for ten years I worked for the National Starch and Chemical Company as manager responsible for East-Central European Business Development. From 1999 I was Hungarian Delegate of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg where I was working as the head of the Socialist Political Group's Women Committee for two years. In 1998 I became an elected Member of the Hungarian Parliament and in 2004 I got the support of the Hungarian Socialist Party for the European parliamentary elections.

When I became a politician my aim was not to accept the world as it is like but I wished to make changes in it. I did not only wish to face the present challenges but to influence the long term trends. That is the reason why since 2004 I have been taking apart in special European parliamentary activities that have great impact on our future, for instance, dealing with energy issues, developing the internal market and protecting consumer rights.

In addition, I am member of the Board of Directors of several European organisations: European Energy Forum, European Internet Foundation, Forum for the Future of Nuclear Energy, Kangaroo Group. With my ten years international political and economic experience and success, I believe, we, European legislators make significant decisions for the strengthening of European competitiveness. Politicians have two fundamental tasks: we must stand for supporting life and keeping peace on this planet; the first one is related to the nature and the second one is related to the humanity – that is a huge responsibility.





## Riitta Mailis Mirjami Myller

I was born 1956 as the third oldest child of 9 siblings. So although my marital status is single, I am certainly familiar with family life.

I attended to primary school at Joensuu and did my academic studies at Tampere University. I studied sociology as my major but also got competence for profession of librarian. I have master's degree in social sciences. After graduation I however decided to become a freelance journalist. Later, year 1987, I was elected to the Finnish Parliament and in 1995 as Finland joined the EU; I became member of the European Parliament.

I found myself to be fascinated with social issues and politics at young age, in the beginning of so called golden years of politics, in the 1970's. First I took part to political youth organization activities and then was a candidate for school board from the social democrat's list. At that time I was 14 years old.

In my youth, I loved acting and was involved in theatre performances. I also did sports, gymnastics and handcrafts. The best grades at school I got from arts and social studies. Cooking and taking care of housework were not my hobbies but an understandable obligation of a daughter of a large family and good teaching to grasp any work later in my life.

Nowadays I relax by gardening and by collecting wild berries and mushrooms in the forests. I would also like to be able to arrange my timetables more often so that I could go see plays and concerts. I feel pangs of conscience when I fail to do so.

The best parts of my current job are the challenges it provides and the versatility. It is a privilege to be part of the European decision-making with members from 26 other member countries. European Union is not only responsible of its decisions to the European citizens but also to the world. It has been fascinating to be part of making common and yet cross-border politics

I have been Member of the European Parliament since 1995. The vice-chairwoman of the PSE Group I was between 1997 and 2004.





From the start of my career in the European Parliament I have been member or substitute member of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Policy (member 1999-2004 and 2004-2009) and substitute member (1995-1999). Environmental issues have always had a significant role in my political thinking.

European Parliament decided on the in April 2007 to set up a temporary committee on climate change. I was happy soon after to become Socialist Group spokeswoman on the temporary Committee on Climate Change. The committee succeeded in formulating proposals on the EU's future integrated policy on climate change and to coordinate Parliament's position in the negotiations regarding the international framework for climate policy after 2012. I remain hopeful of such success in the future also.

## Justas Vincas Paleckis

I was born during the years of the II World War, on 1st January 1942. Far away from Lithuania, in Samara - a Russian town on the Volga river, which at that time was called Kuybyshev. In 1945 my family returned back to Lithuania, to Vilnius. It was there that I attended secondary school, eventually graduating in journalism from the University. Being 17 years old I started a job with a Lithuanian youth paper. At the time of N. Chrustchev's thaw, there was a perceived opportunity to widen the scope of topics, commence discussions and try to breakthrough the boundaries set by the government.

Later I studied diplomacy in Moscow, followed by 14 years of diplomatic service at the USSR Foreign Ministry. If I were to write memoirs, there would be a lot to write about those days and their special features, which determined that in the capital of Switzerland Bern I worked only one and a half years and in Eastern Berlin - even eight.

In 1983 I returned to Vilnius where I took up an administrative job. During M. Gorbachev's "perestroika" I cooperated with Lithuanian independence movement "Sąjūdis". I did everything that the Lithuanian communist party (LCP), in which there were a lot of social democratic convinced members, would segregate from the Communist party of USSR and become a social democratic way party. In 1990 I was elected a vice chair of Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party (LDLP), which after the split of LCP united supporters of independence and democracy. In 1991 I switched to the Social Democratic Party of Lithuania, which has had a tradition for over hundred years. I worked on allying it with the LDLP. When these two parties merged in the year 2000, it was really a happy day in my life.

On 11th March 1990, together with colleagues parliamentarians I became the signatory of the Independence Act of Lithuania. Between 1990-1992 I was a Member of the first freely elected Lithuanian parliament and worked as the vice chair of Foreign Affairs Committee. Then I worked as adviser to the Lithuanian president on foreign affairs. In the years 1996-2001 I represented





Lithuania in UK as an ambassador; I was also accredited to Ireland and Portugal. Later, I worked as a vice Minister on Foreign Affairs, in the Ministry of Lithuania.

At a time, when I was almost appointed as an ambassador to Berlin, the Social Democratic Party proposed me to run for the elections to the European Parliament (EP). Subsequently I was elected to the EP with the support of more than 100 000 Lithuanians, who voted for me personally. It was not an easy decision - Berlin or Brussels? But after 5 years, I really do not regret to have made the choice of Brussels, where I worked in the Committees on Foreign Affairs Committee, Environment Public health and Food Safety and the Temporary Committee on Climate Change.

In 1990-1994 I was a lecturer at Vilnius University, teaching diplomatic practice and foreign journalism. I always tried to bring in sync my work experience of a journalist, diplomat and politician. Already for several decades I write articles and commentaries to Lithuanian and foreign press usually on international affairs. I am constantly invited to discussions on TV and radio. In the past I have published books on Switzerland, the Lithuanian road to Independence and on work in the EP.

My wife - Laima, is a German language specialist. My son Rimvydas works in TV as a journalist. The other son Algirdas started with journalism then went to diplomacy and now became a politician. Daughter Justina studies history of art.

In my youth, I intensively went for sports, having played for many years for the national water-polo team; today, I cannot live without tennis, whereas water continues to attract me to this day. I like to work in the garden and, I find a book to be a wonderful invention; I like memoirs, history literature.

In my life, I try to follow two basic mottos: do not hurry to condemn, try to understand. What you do, do well.

## Libor Rouček

Dr. Libor Rouček's way to the European Parliament has been always connected to the faith in values of freedom, democracy, solidarity and peace. His political beliefs made him to leave communist Czechoslovakia in 1977. Already as a student of the University of Vienna he became publicly active when he held a hunger strike in protest against the Soviet occupation of his country. However, it was his interest in political life not hunger which led him to join the Social Democratic Party of Austria. After obtaining his doctorate degree from the University of Vienna, he moved to Australia. There he was giving lessons at the University of Sydney and he put his mind to discovering tremendous development in East Asia. That he employed almost two decades later when he became member of the European Parliament's Delegation to China. In 1987, he pursued his research at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington and he lectured at the Academy of Science of People's Republic of China.

However, he has never ceased to follow very closely the situation and developments in his home country which suffered under communist regime. For that reason he joined Voice of America in Washington D.C. as an editor and journalist. It was this radio station which enabled him to inform his compatriots about the revolutionary events of 1989. The political change in Czechoslovakia opened Dr. Rouček a possibility to return to his fatherland after a brief work for the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London.. Since he came back, he has been involved in the revival of the Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD). As an experienced journalist he took a position of a party spokesman and later, after the election victory of 1998, he worked for 4 years as the spokesperson of the Czech government. Later, in 2002, he became member of the Parliament. Since 2004 he has been Member of the European Parliament and Head of the Czech Delegation in Socialist Group. In 2006, he was elected 1.Vice-chairman of Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament.

Nonetheless, his political activities and devotion to





public affairs have not barred him from keeping his old hobbies, in particular sport, and taking care of his family. Although he does not have much time these days to prepare for yet another marathon run, he keeps running and skiing regularly in addition to playing football with his young son. He also likes to take a book in his free moments, most often on his favourite topics of travelling and history.

Motto: *"If the European Union did not exist, we would have to invent it."*

## Katrin Saks

I am a true Tallinn girl - having gone to one of its oldest kindergartens and having participated at ice-skating classes where my grandma took me. The school that I graduated during the deepest days of Communism was already then famous for its history, students and majestic buildings it accommodates. Today this school is called by its once a founder, Jacob Westholm and carries its original slogan “Per Aspera Ad Astra”.

It suited me fine then and does now as well!

After the highschool I entered Tartu’s (university founded by the King of Sweden Gustav Adolf in 1632) Department of Journalism and graduated five years later hopping straight to the silver screen. I moved back from Tartu to Tallinn, started my career in the Television business as editor of the Culture program (the choice being either culture or pioneers in TV). At home I was raising two kids.

At the end of 1980s, life suddenly became very fascinating and journalists started to expand the frontiers of true journalism, censors were brought down one by one. Those were challenging times and I moved on to more political shows of the Estonian television. I started holding talk shows of sharp societal content with an aim to improve the World as well as producing documentaries of real life stories at that time. I then fulfilled my dream of journalism because of the action but also from a self-improvement point of view.

One of my biggest ever achievements was a series of TV stores called “Announcement from Reality”, a program that stayed on the peak of the popularity listings for years! The Union of Journalists awarded me with the Grand prize of the year. From 1993 onwards I became a member of the board of the Estonian Television Network and held a job of the Head of Journalistic Program.

In 1993 I also graduated from Estonian School of Diplomacy but I couldn’t forsake TV yet. It happened in 1997. Having left the TV behind I joined “Mõõdukad”, a leftist party with history from 1905, that later became Estonia’s Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond. I was open to new





challenges and politics seemed to be a logical step to the future. At the end of 1990s I was giving lectures on media at the Concordia International University and led the integration projects at the Open Estonia Foundation, an NGO dealing with challenges of the Estonian society.

It was to my biggest surprise that in 1999, I was made a Minister of Population of Estonia. In means hard work with attacks from all sides! Personal development and tribulation, my experience of three years in the Government should be multiplied by another three! Two outcomes from being a minister are a state integration program and creation of policies for Estonian families.

In 2003 I entered Riigikogu, the Estonian Parliament, I was elected the vice-chair of the Culture committee and European Affairs committee. I have been a delegate to the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly where I had a chance to draft a report on the situation of the Finno-Ugric minorities in Russia. The Council of Public Broadcasting trusted me with national media issues, I was also member of Nõuandev kogu of Tartu University and Tallinn Music and Theatre Academy.

One of my most important achievements has been the work as the Vice President of the Social Democratic party in Estonia and my job as the Head of the Estonian Union for Child Welfare.

In 2006, after being elected as President of Estonia, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves' seat was free for me to take up the task of a Member of European Parliament. I am a member of the Foreign Affairs committee as well as Human Rights and Security and Defence committees. I am a substitute at the Internal Market and consumers' protection committee, a member of the Central Asia delegation and in the delegation with relations with the Russian Federation.

## Adrian Severin

Dr. Adrian Severin's political career started in the beginning of 1990, when he became member of the Provisional Council of National Union. Consequently he became a member of the newly formed National Salvation Front (FSN). During the same period he held the function of State Secretary for Privatization in the Ministry of National Economy.

After the general elections of May 1990, when the National Salvation Front won the absolute majority in the parliament and the presidency, Mr. Severin became Deputy Prime Minister for Reform and Relations with the Parliament in the newly formed Petre Roman government. After the fall of this government in September 1991, he was appointed as President of the National Agency for Privatization and Development of the Small and Medium Enterprises.

In 1992, Mr. Severin was elected Vice-President of the National Salvation Front, which later became the Democratic Party (PD). After the parliamentary elections from September 1992, he was elected as Member of Parliament (MP) in the Chamber of Deputies. As an MP in the opposition, he was leader of the Democratic Party Political Parliamentary Group in the Chamber of Deputies (1992-1996), but also a member of international parliamentary organizations such as the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, where he was a Rapporteur, Deputy Chairman of the Committee for Human Rights (1995-1996) and Vice-President of the Socialist Group (1995-1996).

After the 1996 parliamentary elections, Mr. Severin was re-elected as MP and the Democratic Party became part of the governing coalition. As such, Mr. Severin was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister in the Victor Ciorbea government. In this function he had several important achievements for the Romanian foreign policy, such as the signature of the Treaty of Good Neighborly Relations with Ukraine and the official visit of the US President Bill Clinton to Romania. At the end of 1997 he resigned from this office as a result of some





disagreements with the other members of the coalition government and resumed his parliamentary activity. In this position, he had an intense international activity being appointed Head of the Romanian Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (1998-1999).

In April 1999, as a result of disagreements of principle with the Democratic Party leadership, Mr. Severin left the party together with a group of colleagues faithful to the authentic social democratic values. In May 2000 he was elected President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. In September 2000, Mr. Severin joined the Social Democracy Party of Romania (PDSR), which became the Social Democratic Party (PSD) in January 2001, after winning the parliamentary elections in November 2000. Mr. Severin was also re-elected MP after these elections. In 2002, he was elected Honorary President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

In 2004, after finishing his mandate as Honorary President, Mr. Severin was appointed Head of the Ad-hoc Committee of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly for Belarus (2004-2006). In November 2004, after the parliamentary elections he was re-elected as MP in the Chamber of Deputies. In 2006 he became Chairmen of the Romanian Social Democratic Delegation in the European Parliament (until 2007 with Observer status). In this quality he was also a member of the Conference of Delegation Chairmen. In 2007, he was also appointed President of the Delegation to the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Cooperation Committee.

In November 2007, after the European legislative elections which were held in Romania, Mr. Severin was re-elected as Member of the European Parliament. According to the Romanian legislation he had thus to resign from his office of MP in the Romanian Chamber of Deputies. Currently his activity unfolds mainly in the European Parliament, where he is affiliated to the Socialist Group, being the Head of the Romanian Social Democratic Delegation.

## Marek Siwec

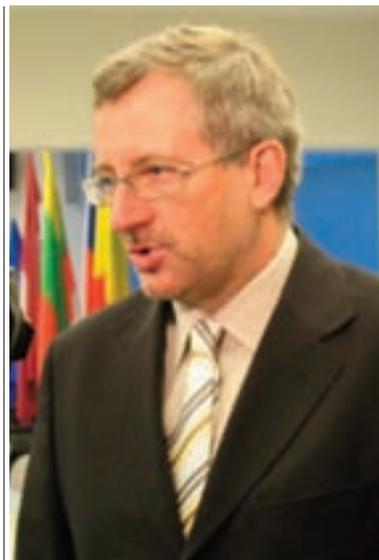
Born on 13 March 1955 in Piekary Śląskie, Marek Siwec originally trained as a physicist and later as a journalist. Currently, he occupies the position of Vice-President of the European Parliament and is a prominent member of the Democratic Left Alliance. Throughout his political career, he has been known and appreciated for cultivating strong ties with the Wielkopolska Region.

As a politician, over the past twenty years he has risen through the ranks to reach high-profile positions in the state administration. To quote his own remark, his workplaces have always been located along the historic Warsaw Royal Route: first the Sejm, then the National Council of Radio Broadcasting and Television, the Presidential Palace and finally – the National Security Bureau.

An urban legend has it that he first decided to pursue a political career on one of his journalistic assignments, while accompanying Polish President Lech Walesa on his high-profile visit to Britain. Along with several international journalists anxious for an interview, the young Siwec was patiently waiting in front of 10 Downing Street in the pouring rain. After three hours of braving the British weather, the rain-soaked reporters saw Walesa disappear in his car and leave. It was one of those moments when you realise you're not necessarily on the right side of history.

60 Rue de Wiertz, Brussels, the seat of the European Parliament, only became Marek Siwec's professional address in 2004. It is here that he deals on a daily basis with a range of pressing foreign policy issues, including Ukraine, the Middle East and the Black Sea region. He also serves as a vice-president of the international organisation of the European Friends of Israel.

A big fan of cycling and all kinds of skiing (except perhaps for ski jumping), he has recently developed a passion for snowboarding, too. On a popular racing bike he has twice managed to cover a few of the most difficult stages of Tour de France and on several occasions – the whole distance of the Tour de Pologne. Last but not least, he is a connoisseur of good books and wine.





For the past 31 years he has been happily married to Ewa, a medical doctor. They have two adult children, Ewa and Maciej, and two dogs – a black Scottish Terrier named Turbo, and Harry, a white Westie.

# How we fly around the EU. 7 MEPs about 9 challenges



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