

### The mapping of Europe and ideas of integration: in the new member countries, national meanings of European culture determine debates about the desired European Union's mission

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## **The mapping of Europe and ideas of integration**

**In the new member countries, national meanings of European culture determine debates about the desired European Union's mission**

**Christian Domnitz**

### **Abstract**

With EU enlargement, peculiar Central European ideas and traditions of integration emerged in European politics. In the discussions on a European constitution, the representatives of the new member states surprised the "old" Europe with meanings of Europe that were situated far beyond the canonised Western concepts of pragmatic political integration. Central European politicians and political essayists discussed a canon of cultural and religious European values and the role of the nations in the European Union.

Research on the contemporary history of Central Europe brings light into the traditions and the development of Central European meanings of Europe. Before 1989 and East of the "Iron curtain", Europe rather served as a place of desire than as a concrete concept, a mechanism of integration or an institutional framework. The cases of Poland and the Czech Republic (respectively the former Czechoslovakia) show that the salient feature of their meanings of Europe in history is the high significance of the nation. In the Eastern bloc, Europe was construed along terms of culture and civilisation. Party officials, dissidents and journalists framed Europe nationally. Regarding ideas of integration, 1989 stands for continuity in Central European meanings of Europe.

The historical East-West difference in the „thinking of Europe“ and former mappings of Europe in the new member countries re-shape the present new European Union. Exclusive meanings of Europe in Central Europe challenge policies of integration, migration, citizenship and governance. There is a drift towards demarcating a European self and towards defining a collective in cultural terms. This trend strengthens the paradigm of neighbourhood vis-à-vis transnationalisation and unification in the E.U. In the debates on the foreign relations of the Union, exponents of a cultural European identity address questions of self-demarcation and self-delimitation.

### **Keywords**

Central Europe, History, Europeanism, Regional traditions, European Integration, Nation, Culture

In the negotiations of the future of the European Union, the new member states surprised the “old” Europe with unexpected views. The meanings of Europe that their representatives put forth in the discussions on a European constitution were situated far beyond the canonised Western concepts of pragmatic political integration in Europe with both supranational and intergovernmental procedures. Behind the surface of a struggle for influence in the European Union, Central European politicians and political essayists debated a European identity and how it shall look like. They discussed a canon of cultural and religious European values and the role of the nations in the European Union. The course of the negotiations in the E.U. made obvious that in the preparations of the eastward enlargement, peculiar Central European ideas and traditions of integration had been neglected. To elaborate on this issue, I suggest to look into the contemporary history of Central Europe and to analyse how the societies of the today’s new member states perceived their neighbours. How did they define their “self” against the several “others”? What were the uses of “culture” and “the nation” in these debates? What did the Central European nations share with the West, and what separated them from it?

East of the “Iron curtain”, the perception of Western European integration remained vague. “Europe” rather served as a place of desire than as a concrete concept, a mechanism of integration or an institutional framework. After the breakdown of communist rule in 1989, the former societies of the Eastern Bloc wanted to “return to Europe”. In search of applicable models of politics and economy, they re-oriented westwards. However, they considered their own idea of Europe and of a Western civilisation the destination of their return. Different regional and national traditions and the resulting divergent ideas of integration took their toll. After 20 years of transition it becomes clear that Central Europe’s post-communist political landscapes will not merge into the ideal of Western democracy, market economy and supra-national integration. The attempts of a modernising catch-up did not progress to the Western state of the art that the Western European elites expected to be its indisputable end. Despite of great efforts of the European Commission, of powerful foundations and of numerous non-governmental organisations,<sup>1</sup> differing political cultures remained in the enlarged East. Furthermore, new national delimitations of identity and culture challenged the politics of the European Union. Confronted with the approaches of Central European politicians as the Kaczyński brothers or Václav Klaus, Western European hopes of convergence and of the correction of the 20th century’s errors in Central European history faded away. Furthermore, new member states’ politicians opposed the guiding principle of the unification of the continent – the continuous deepening of European integration. My evaluation of this field of tension stresses the influence of post-communist Central European remembrance. In a European context, this perspective examines unconscious dispositions and invented traditions in the re-unification of the continent.

Newest research has described how Central European expectations have been confronted with Western institutions’ procedures, with Western rituals and Western habits in the years after 1989. Although the re-unification of the continent is mainly considered as a success story, Central European expectations sometimes turned into disillusionment.<sup>2</sup> In the other way

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. the contribution of Laure Delcour in this series of working papers.

<sup>2</sup> For the political level, cf. Amelie Kutter and Vera Trappmann, eds., *Das Erbe des Beitritts.*

*Europäisierung in Mittel- und Osteuropa* [The Legacy of the Accession. Europeanisation in Central and Eastern Europe] (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2006). For everyday life’s expectations of the young generation, cf. Henri Vogt, *Between Utopia and disillusionment. A narrative of the political transformation in Eastern Europe* (New York: Berghahn, 2005).

round, tensions between Western expectations and Central European traditions of the framing of Europe came unexpectedly and are only rarely reflected. However, they mark an important factor of the European Union's enlargement. To explain the legacy of pre-1989 debates about Europe for the current integration process, I will analyse Central European's identifications with Europe, their mental framing of the continent and their ideas of political integration. On the Polish and the Czechoslovak example I will discuss specific meanings of Europe, starting from the communist period. Beyond the "European core", these colourful representations of Europe were remembered and re-activated later. I will oppose the common explanation of the year of 1989 as a rupture and a new start. I am asking what has not been overthrown in 1989. Which framings of Europe and what attitudes towards integration persisted – consciously or unconsciously – in the optimistic awakenings of 1989?

### National meanings of Europe

For the understanding of European integration, the relationship between ideas of Europe and of its nations is a key question. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, national identifications were projected on "Europe".<sup>3</sup> In its second half, the ongoing integration process relativised the significance of national perspectives only in the Western part of the continent. Meanwhile, Central European ideas of Europe evolved in arenas of strong national closure.<sup>4</sup> Generally, identifying with Europe does not necessarily eliminate national perceptions and perspectives. A European public sphere is in the making,<sup>5</sup> but even here the main topics and arguments are the result of debates on the national or regional levels. Mostly in a second step, they come up Europe-wide. However, for the late years of state socialism in Central Europe this finding is much more relevant. Even in the cross-national network of the Central European dissent, political thought and the reflected transnational options based on nationally shaped problem awareness. "Polish", "Czech", or "German" questions have been projected on Europe. In many Central European debates, reframing Europe means reframing the nation. For instance, ideas of "Europe" of the post-1989 Czech political elites can be understood as Czech designs, and Czech Europeanism derived from Czech self-delimitation and self-evaluation.<sup>6</sup> The national paradigm remained the foundation of a European thinking in Poland as well.<sup>7</sup> Even if self-perceptions exceeded the level of the nation states, a national perspective remained. The will to negotiate politics, identity and culture in a European context developed in the available early-stage-fora of the nations.

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<sup>3</sup> Bo Stråth, "Introduction: Europe as a Discourse," in *Europe and the other and Europe as the other*, ed. Bo Stråth (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> Mikael af Malmberg and Bo Stråth, eds., *The meaning of Europe. Variety and contention within and among nations* (Oxford: Berg, 2002).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Hartmut Kaelble, "European Self-Understanding in the 20th Century," in *Reflections on Multiple modernities. European, Chinese and other interpretations*, ed. Dominic Sachsenmaier, Jens Reidel, and Shmuel N. Eisenstadt (Leiden: 2002).

<sup>6</sup> Vladimír Macura, "Sémiotika Evropy [The semiotics of Europe]," in *Evropa očima Čechů* [Europe through the eyes of the Czechs], ed. Eva Hahnová (Praha: Nakladatelství Franze Kafky, 1997).

<sup>7</sup> Claudia Kraft and Katrin Steffen, eds., *Europas Platz in Polen. Polnische Europa-Konzeptionen vom Mittelalter bis zum EU-Beitritt* [Europe's place in Poland. Polish Concepts of Europe from the Middle Ages to E.U. Accession] (Osnabrück: fibre, 2007), Thomas Lane and Marian Wolański, eds., *Poland and European Unity. Ideas and Reality* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2007).

The division of Europe in an Eastern and Western bloc from 1949 to 1989 created not only separate geopolitical spheres but also different cultural and mental dispositions. National meanings of Europe and attitudes towards integration vary between both sides of the former “Iron Curtain”. Central European ideas of Europe rather arose from specific regional traditions and experiences than from pan-European debates about integration. While in the West of the continent meanings of Europe were predominantly defined in political terms, Central Europeans defined their Europe culturally, as “Central Europe” itself was defined in terms of culture. Consequently, the western European integration process is a result of political pragmatism, while the Central European “dream of Europe” arose from the desire of belonging to a western culture. The logics of belonging – inclusion and exclusion – have created and strengthened cultural identities and national assignments east of the Iron Curtain. Both communist party elites and underground writers propagated and debated them in the national arenas of the Western countries of the socialist bloc.

### **Europe in the communist propaganda**

Striving for legitimacy, even the Communist parties developed their own meaning of Europe. In the first decades after the end of World War II, they rejected the Western European claim to represent Europe and stated that the major part of the geographical Europe was now socialist. They made progress and peace the leading narratives of their idea of Europe. A revision of the communist capture of Central Europe was their greatest fear. Thus, security issues shaped their idea of Europe. Their slogan of a “peaceful coexistence” should guarantee the persistence of state socialist rule. It was invented in 1975 at the “Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe” (CSCE), when the European and North American governments met in Helsinki. Campaigns in the official press were ought to disseminate propaganda of peace and security throughout the societies. Narratives of progress, of an East-West dialogue and of mutual economic cooperation were prominently featured in the official sphere during the *détente*. At the same time, the centralised propaganda disseminated the so-called “dialectics of national consciousness and internationalism” which meant that international solidarity was to be accompanied by the national consciousness of its actors. In national communism, party officials incorporated nationalism into their ideology.<sup>8</sup>

Official writers of state socialism debated European culture. I will exemplify this on the Polish weekly “Polityka” and the Czechoslovak “Tvorba”. Both were political magazines with a focus on culture. They covered events of world politics and cultural life. These papers were not the central propaganda instruments of the Communist parties. Nevertheless, they were subordinated to their strict control. This included the placement of ideology on their pages. The “dialectics of national consciousness and internationalism” were part of this ideology – patriotism was told to be the necessary precondition for inter-national exchange. While “Tvorba” mostly followed this scheme,<sup>9</sup> “Polityka” emancipated from the propaganda with the idea of an “open patriotism” that favoured cross-border exchange and comparative

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Vladimir Tismaneanu, “Understanding national stalinism,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 32 (1999), Krzysztof Tyszka, *Nacjonalizm w komunizmie. Ideologia narodowa w Związku Radzieckim i Polsce Ludowej* [Nationalism in Communism. National Ideology in the Soviet Union and in Poland] (Warszawa: IFIS PAN, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> G.M. Svirin and R. Reiner, “Internacionalismus a národní hrdost v etapě rozvinutého socialismu [Internationalism and national pride in developed socialism],” *Tvorba*, 8.10.1980.

perspectives.<sup>10</sup> In these papers' representations of Europe, propaganda of cooperation between East and West prevailed in the first half of the 1980s. This official party-controlled cooperation covered the high politics, security questions and economic issues. It accompanied the efforts of the Communist parties to find agreements with the Western European governments in order to legitimate and stabilise their rule. However, this kind of cooperation was heavily criticised in the civil rights' movements as well as by the Western governments. To refute this critique, the official propaganda added "culture" to the catalogue of cooperation, even though the debate on European culture had been the paradigmatic programme of famous independent magazines, as for instance in the Polish exile magazine "Kultura" or, in the underground, "Kultura niezależna".

In the Polish "Polityka", an article on "The three perspectives on Europe" made a common European culture the third perspective. The author Bogdan Suchodolski, a professor of pedagogy, pledged for the integrating power of arts and of common European values between East and West. Nevertheless, he heavily polemised against the "limited comprehension of Central Europe". In the exile's and underground's discussions about "Central Europe", he saw the "suicide of Europe".<sup>11</sup> One year later, a former CSCE delegation leader wrote in the Czechoslovak "Tvorba" about the Cultural Forum of Budapest, a CSCE follow-up meeting. He reduced the relevance of the meeting to security issues and understood cultural exchange only as an instrument of stabilizing the official cooperation procedures between the national states. He criticised the parallel meeting of Susan Sontag, György Konrád, Pavel Kohout and other independent intellectuals as an "Anti-Forum of private persons" who would "hide political ambitions behind a pretended cultural interest".<sup>12</sup> Another year later, "Tvorba" discussed European culture at the occasion of the Venice meeting of the "Days of the European Nations and Countries". The author reflected national roots of European culture and philosophic conceptions that he considered European, as for instance humanism and the idea of a civilisation that is situated at the crossroads of cultural development and technological progress.<sup>13</sup> These texts are typical communist Euro-propaganda with construed dichotomies, patronising rhetoric and artificial simplicity. In the communist propaganda, "culture" and "the nation" are tightly interweaved and projected onto a European context.

### **The underground's and dissent's Europe**

In Central European pre-1989 societies, Europe and the West were perceived as "the other" that was separated from the Polish or Czechoslovak everyday life by an insurmountable gap. This is why dissidents addressed a belonging of the Central European nations to a "European" culture and civilisation. In the "real existing socialism" of the Eastern bloc, the appropriated western notions of freedom, human rights and democracy had a utopian pretension. Intellectuals of Central and Eastern Europe re-negotiated their self-understandings in the debate about a "Central Europe" in these terms. Independent peace activists anticipated the end of Europe's bloc separation and fought the official propaganda of a "peaceful co-

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with the „Polityka“ editor Adam Krzemiński, Jan 10th, 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Bogdan Suchodolski, "Trzy spojrzenia na Europę [Three perspectives on Europe]," *Polityka*, 11.8.1984.

<sup>12</sup> Ilja Hulinský, "Zamyšlení nad budapešťským kulturním fórem [Reflections on the Budapest Forum of Culture]," *Tvorba*, 18.12.1985.

<sup>13</sup> Ladislav Gawlik, "Benátské zrcadlo evropské kultury [The Venice Mirror of European Culture]," *Tvorba*, 15.10.1986.

existence of East and West". They claimed citizen's rights and civil participation.<sup>14</sup> In the attempts to overcome the bloc division of the continent "from below", political and cultural aspirations were interwoven.

The Czech "Charter 77" referred to the officially acknowledged principles of the CSCE Final Act and called for human rights' guarantees that were fixed in Helsinki as well. However, Czech dissent writers like Jiří Dienstbier and Jiří Hájek were sceptical because of the official character of the CSCE process. They wanted to transform negotiations between the governments into debates between people. In 1986, the peace movements in Western and Eastern Europe gave an example of trans-national discussion on a common platform. Its title was "Giving Real Life to the Helsinki Accords", and it criticised the CSCE follow-up conference in 1986 in Vienna for neglecting non-governmental commitment. Its subscribers from East and West pledged for "a peace constitution for Europe that is based on the right of self-determination for all nations".<sup>15</sup> The document manifested a citizen's counter-model to the protracting negotiations between the governments' representatives in the CSCE. Meanwhile, reform-oriented communists and Marxist dissidents perceived Mikhail Gorbachev's "Common European House" as a chance for a *rapprochement* of the European nations in East and West with a renewed socialism in the East.

Representations of Europe in the underground press often refer to self-determination in a "Europe of the nations". Dissidents and underground writers stressed the cultural foundations of the Central European nations under the sign of Europe.<sup>16</sup> They claimed their cultures, in their essence, "belonged to Europe". They created "Central Europe" as a pre-stage of the return into a Europe of several cultures. This construction opposed the western prescription of being "East European". The Czech exile writer Milan Kundera argued, the Soviets had kidnapped Central Europe that culturally belongs to the West of the continent.<sup>17</sup>

However, the debate about "Central Europe" aimed only at a loose political integration, what becomes apparent in the cultures of remembrance of the underground circles. Those who debated "Central Europe" referred to interwar concepts of federations in Eastern Central Europe that were not federalist in the sense of creating new powerful institutions above the nation. For instance, the "Intermarium" (Międzymorze) was mainly debated in the Second Polish Republic of 1918-1939 – in the society that was considered to be its leading nation. The neighbours referred to it only reluctantly. The creators of federalist ideas in the interwar period had not envisaged the handing-over of sovereignty to supranational institutions. In his book „The New Europe“, the Czech president Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk stated, a „federation of nations“ could only arise if the nations were free and unified on their own. His idea of a

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Harold Gordon Skilling, *Charter 77 and Human rights in Czechoslovakia* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1981).

<sup>15</sup> Europäisches Netzwerk für den Ost-West-Dialog, ed., *Das Helsinki-Abkommen mit wirklichem Leben erfüllen (1986)* [Giving Real Life to the Helsinki Accords] (Berlin: 1987).

<sup>16</sup> Michał Buchowski, "Od "Mitteleuropą" do Europy środkowej: Zarys dziejów idei [From "Mitteleuropa" to Central Europe. A sketch in the history of ideas]," *Sprawy narodowościowe*, no. 19 (2001), Miloš Havelka and Ladislav Cabada, eds., *Západní, východní a střední Evropa jako kulturní a politické pojmy* [Western, Eastern, and Central Europe as Cultural and Political Terms] (Plzeň: Západočeská univerzita, 2000), Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, "Mental Maps. Die Konstruktion von geographischen Räumen in Europa seit der Aufklärung. Literaturbericht [Mental Maps. The Construction of Geographical Spaces in Europe since the Enlightenment. A Survey on Literature]," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 28, no. 3 (2002).

<sup>17</sup> Milan Kundera, "The Tragedy of Central Europe," *The New York Review of Books*, 26.4.1986.

synthesis of the national politics and cultures was rather vague.<sup>18</sup> In the „New Europe“, ideas of integration did not transcend the nation. They were negotiated in and between the nation states, presupposing that the existing inner power relations shall persist. The expected result was a higher weight of the small Central European nations against their German and Soviet opponents.<sup>19</sup> Their objective was external strength, not inner integration. Thus, the notions of a confederation or an alliance fit the loose Central European „federations“ better than the terminology of the sources.<sup>20</sup>

The Central-Europeanism of the 1980's was interconnected with national ideas of “Polishness” or “Czechness”.<sup>21</sup> Polish narratives of European Christianity and of the Eastern border as the “antemurale christianitatis” stressed a Polish defense of Europe against “barbarian” attacks.<sup>22</sup> Europe was defined against the East.<sup>23</sup> A distinction from the West was not addressed as clear as from the East, but existed in the thinking of the “centre” of Europe as well. Some advocates of “Central Europe” even identified a Western loss of identity and culture. Only in the centre of Europe, that was the assertion of the Central Europeanists, they had been preserved.<sup>24</sup> Not only “Central Europe”, but even the greater Europe has been delimited against both East and West. The Polish underground intellectual Aleksander Hall saw European culture threatened by Soviet and American domination.<sup>25</sup> In Central Europe, culture was not only fundamental in the framing of Europe, but also in the strife for national self-determination. The Polish underground writer and later editor of “Radio Free Europe” Zdzisław Najder wrote in 1979, „as long as we do not achieve an independent national existence, our aspirations shall be focused on the sphere of thought and of cultural creativity“.<sup>26</sup> The dissidents' thinking of a „European culture“ practised resistance against domination from circles outside the own culture and the own collective.

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<sup>18</sup> Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, *Nová Evropa. Stanovisko slovanské* [The New Europe. The Slav standpoint] (Praha: Dubský, 1920), 88, 145.

<sup>19</sup> Janusz Korwin-Mikke, "The Middle Europe," in *Myśli o naszej Europie* [Thinking about our Europe], ed. Redakcja Obozu (Wrocław: Profil, 1988).

<sup>20</sup> An overview on several regional understandings of federalism is given in Wiesław Bokajło, ed., *Federalizm. Teoria i koncepcje* [Federalism. Theory and Concepts] (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1998).

<sup>21</sup> Mirosław Dymarski and Jerzy Juchnowski, eds., *Europa środkowo-wschodnia w polskiej myśli politycznej* [Central Eastern Europe in the Polish Political Thinking], *Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis no 2624*. (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2004), Jan Křen, *Historické proměny češství* [Historical metamorphoses of Czechness] (Praha: Karolinum, 1992).

<sup>22</sup> Małgorzata Morawiec, "„Antemurale christianitatis“. Polen als Vormauer des christlichen Europa [„Antemurale christianitatis“. Poland as the bulwark of Christian Europe]," *Jahrbuch für europäische Geschichte* 2 (2001).

<sup>23</sup> For the general context of this distinction cf. Iver B. Neumann, "Russia as Central Europe's Constituting Other," *East European Politics and Societies* 7 (1993).

<sup>24</sup> See, for instance, Leszek Szaruga, "Notatki ze środka Europy [Notes from the Middle of Europe]," in *Zachód porwany. Eseje i Polemiki* [The Kidnapped West. Essays and Polemics] (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo oświatowe BIS, 1984).

<sup>25</sup> Aleksander Hall, "Europa, ale jaka? [Europe, but which one?]," *Bratniak*, no. 19 (1979).

<sup>26</sup> Zdzisław Najder, "Polska i Europa [Poland and Europe]," in *Polityka niepodległościowa* [Politics of Independence], ed. Polskie Porozumienie Niepodległościowe / PPN (Warszawa 1983: 1979).



## Broad acceptance of the nation's significance in Europe

In the years before the collapse of communism, the official press competed with the underground. The oppositions and the party elites led a dialogical struggle about the meaning of Europe. Dissidents and underground writers referred to the official CSCE propaganda, because they wanted to be legal. The official media adapted underground's narratives of European culture, because they wanted to attract readers. The oppositions appealed to Europe to mobilise for a national self-determination from below, the communist elites invoked a Europe of peace and claimed to preserve national interests. A struggle was set off about whose idea of Europe drew a more promising image of the future and about who presents the nation best against a European background. The quest for the most attractive slogans let communist narratives of Europe amalgamate with more and more popular, but hidden underground narratives. In this struggle, the texts became ambivalent. Furthermore, in this exchange a broad debate about Europe was shaped that reached many recipients in several spheres of state socialism. Its common denominator was the high significance of the nation in Europe.<sup>27</sup>

In the decline of communist rule, the media reformulated the official propaganda. The editorial staff interpreted the guidelines of press control more loose. Even if their texts had to refer to officially accepted narratives, they sometimes went far beyond the official interpretation. New meaning was produced. In the Polish "Polityka", the limits of discourse were wide. The paper described the Cultural Forum of Budapest as an opening of Hungary towards the West. The author mentioned Siemens translation equipment, praised the conference buildings and stated that they were built by Austrians. He openly stressed severe conflicts between Eastern and Western understandings of "culture". Finally, he took the opportunity to present his own understanding of European culture and proposed Christianity, Roman law, Greek aesthetics and humanist ideals.<sup>28</sup> This is a mixture of underground and official narratives of European culture.

The dissidents' scepticism towards the lagging CSCE process entered the official arena as well. In 1987, the „Tvorba“ journalist Milan Syruček reported from the Vienna CSCE follow up conference under the title „Progress or a dancing step?“<sup>29</sup> He described the Vienna happenings more as a gala than as a goal-oriented conference and asked, whether Vienna could catch up with the contemporary dynamics of world politics.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, he made concessions to the official propaganda and held the U.S. delegation responsible for the delayed CSCE process. Excluding Northern America, he argued, a "European culture of solidarity" could be the basis of a "new philosophy of Europe".<sup>31</sup> The "Tvorba" articles of Milan Syruček illustrate the coexistence of both official and independent narratives of Europe

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<sup>27</sup> In times of crisis, public discourses contract around key topics. Cf. Kurt Imhof, "Öffentlichkeit und Identität [The Public Sphere and Identity]," in *Transnationale Öffentlichkeiten und Identitäten im 20. Jahrhundert* [Transnational Public Spheres and Identities in the 20th Century], ed. Hartmut Kaelble, Martin Kirsch, and Alexander Schmidt-Gernig (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2002).

<sup>28</sup> Zdzisław Pietrasik, "Europa kulturalna [The Cultural Europe]," *Polityka*, 26.10.1985.

<sup>29</sup> Milan Syruček, "Videň: Taneční krok, či pokrok? [Progress, or a dancing step?]," *Tvorba*, 2.12.1987. The Czech „pokrok“ allows a play with words, it means „progress“ but includes „step“. In an interview of June 16th, 2006, Syruček stated to have constant exchange with Czechoslovak dissidents.

<sup>30</sup> Milan Syruček, "Stačí Videň tempu doby? [Can Vienna keep up with our era's developments?]," *Tvorba*, 3.8.1988.

<sup>31</sup> Milan Syruček, "Nový evropský horizont [The New European Horizon]," *Tvorba*, 1.2.1989.

in the official state socialist discourse about Europe. The condemning and the exclusion of the United States of America was the last remnant of the official propaganda here.

In the last years of state socialism, the limits of discourse widened. "Polityka" published texts that stressed Western Europe as the positive "other". The "Polityka" author Krzysztof Teodor Toeplitz wrote in 1987 about a Polish need to "Return to Europe" and stated, in the anti-semitic campaigns of 1968 Europeanness got lost in the country. Now, Poles would not possess the comprehensions, ideas and experiences that were needed to understand contemporary Europe.<sup>32</sup> While Toeplitz sketched a way to Europe rather vaguely, the "Polityka" essayist Adam Krzemiński did not hesitate to mark the road. His essay „A Cobweb in the Centre of Europe" mapped historical and present connections between East and West. Krzemiński argued these micro-references formed a network that makes up Central Europe.<sup>33</sup> One year later, the famous essay "My dream of Central Europe" of the Hungarian dissident György Konrád was printed in "Polityka". It proposed a third way between East and West.<sup>34</sup> Though it still differed from Milan Kundera's text about the "kidnapped West", the official publication of texts about "Central Europe" was revolutionary for state socialism. In Poland, even the old narrative of the "peaceful coexistence" of East and West was openly criticised, for instance by the Polish ambassador in France and former journalist Janusz Stefanowicz.<sup>35</sup> The debate about European culture continued and was enriched by Gorbachev's conception of a "Common European house".<sup>36</sup> The Czechoslovak "Tvorba" drew lines across the bloc border as well, but later. In March 1989, Milan Syruček wrote, Czechoslovakia was in the "heart of Europe". Its position at the axes of European politics, economy, culture and humanity qualified it for leading an East-West dialogue.<sup>37</sup> Few months later, the Communist party's "Rudé Právo" argued in the same way on its title page.<sup>38</sup>

Long before the breakdown of communist rule, new forms emerged in the discourse about Europe and new meaning was produced. Though not mentioned explicitly, the narrators of civic ideas of Europe "from below" spread meaning out to the official public of state socialism. In the struggle for power, invocations of "Central Europe" and of a "Return to Europe" amalgamated with official narratives. The debate on a "common European culture" altered from supporting the official "peaceful coexistence" towards negotiating the future of the continent. Thus, underground narratives had entered a broad and public debate. Underground and official writers created common dispositions of Europe in Central Europe's societies. Central Europeans faced Europe and discussed their nation's role in it. In Poland, thinking about Europe had been possible long before 1989. In Czechoslovakia the turn proceeded in the year of 1989. Here, until the last months of communism ambivalence and hybridity persisted in the official press. When the official state socialist press became

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<sup>32</sup> KTT, "Powrót do Europy? [A Return to Europe?]," *Polityka*, 14.2.1987.

<sup>33</sup> Adam Krzemiński, "Pajęczyna w środku Europy [A Cobweb in the Middle of Europe]," *Polityka*, 3.1.1987.

<sup>34</sup> György Konrád, "Sen o Europie Środkowej [The Dream of Central Europe]," *Polityka*, 12.11.1988.

<sup>35</sup> Janusz Stefanowicz, "Współistnienie: Dogmat częściowo nieswieży [Coexistence: A Partly Outdated Dogma]," *Polityka*, 17.9.1988.

<sup>36</sup> Zbigniew Czacot-Gawrak, "Długi most Europy [The Long Bridge of Europe]," *Polityka*, 26.11.1988, Anna Wolff-Powęska, "Głód Europy. Przed przeprowadzką do wspólnego domu [Hunger for Europe. Before Moving into the Common House]," *Polityka*, 1.4.1989.

<sup>37</sup> Milan Syruček, "Naše místo ve světě [Our Place in the World]," *Tvorba*, 29.3.1989. In a book that has been written for a more limited public, he claimed this already in 1977: Milan Syruček, *Evropa zítřka* [Tomorrow's Europe] (Praha: Práce, 1977), 10.

<sup>38</sup> "Náš zájem v Evropě [Our Interest in Europe]," *Rudé právo*, 19.8.1989.

undermined by underground narratives, these entered a broad, but nationally framed public. In difference to some transnationalising circles of the dissent, the attention towards the neighbouring countries remained cautious in the official public.

### **1989 as rupture and continuity**

In 1989, the systems of rule and the limits of discourse suddenly changed in Central Europe. The former dissent's narratives of Europe were now discussed in an open public. Their identity politics formed meanings of Europe in new power relations. While social indicators such as consumption, travelling, and migration point at a tremendous transnationalisation of the Central European societies after 1989, a specific Central European framing of Europe persisted. The consensus on the importance of the nation in Europe remained beyond doubt. In the "return to Europe" it was often unconscious and only sometimes debated. The Central European re-framing of Europe started long before 1989. Here, 1989 does not represent a sudden rupture, but rather a turning point. Narratives of Europe were constantly – and are still being – realigned.

While 1989 is often understood as the beginning of a Europhoria in Central Europe, earlier discourses anticipated the end of bloc separation well before 1989. The key topics of the debates after 1989 originate in these earlier discourses. Because official and independent ideas had shaped the meanings of Europe long before a membership in the European Union was possible, the Western Europe remained as 'the other'. Central European national sites of remembrance, which were shaped by the dissidents or even by the Communist parties before 1989, remained. After 1989, identity politics stressed their European dimension. The Czechoslovak remembrance of the Munich agreement of 1938 was heavily exploited by the communists and remained in the collective memory of today's Czech society. Underground activists of Peoples' Poland criticised the treaty of Yalta for installing Soviet domination over their country, and so do Polish intellectuals today. Both sites of remembrance invoke Europe and point at the political geography of the continent. The communist elites understood the cooperation of the CSCE in national contributions to the security of Europe. After the end of the communist era, the new politicians saw the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) as a guarantee of the „European postwar order“ and of the postwar national borders. The former dissident and Czechoslovak minister of foreign affairs Jiří Dienstbier pledged for a permanent European Security Commission in Prague in 1990 and 1992. Before 1989, the oppositions and the state socialist governments struggled for power in national arenas, and national historical consciousness pre-formed the "return to Europe".<sup>39</sup> Traditionally, several Polish and Czech intellectuals perceived supranational conceptions as a threat to national self-determination. Debates about European cultural unity and diversity were led in the whole 20th century's Central Europe, and national contributions to European culture were stressed. The invocation of Europe legitimised national policies and described national or regional culture as European. In the middle of a tremendous change, the set of Central European meanings of Europe persisted.

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<sup>39</sup> Cf. Jiří Vykoukal, ed., *Visegrád. Možnosti a meze středoevropské spolupráce* [Visegrád. Possibilities and Limits of Central European Cooperation] (Praha: Dokořán, 2003).

## Central European meanings of Europe and European integration

Activities of Central European pressure groups for the rapprochement of Europe are rooted in pre-1989 commitments. Polish Catholics and peace activists created the foundation "Poland in Europe" to continue debates of the church-initiated colloquium "Central Europe"<sup>40</sup> and of the independent group "Wolność i pokój" (Peace and Freedom).<sup>41</sup> Czech dissidents and reformist Marxists had written about the overcoming of Europe's bloc separation since the early 1980's. They founded the journal "Mezinárodní politika" (Foreign affairs) to spread these debates in a broader public, focusing on the principles of integration in Europe.

After the breakdown of communism, the pre-1989 meanings of Europe encountered the context and the normative pretensions of E.U. integration. In Central Europe, the enlargement process stimulated debates about supranationality, cosmopolitanism, federalism and the nation. In advance of the European Union's enlargement, Western transfers were focused on the E.U. accession of Central Europe's states. In their confrontation with Central European framings of Europe, hybrid meanings of the future shape of the continent arose. A field of tension between regionalism and integrationism emerged. Western and Central European integrationists debated narratives and slogans that had been successful in the western part of the continent already. In contrast, regionalists referred to Central European traditions. Intermingling these two tendencies, many political essayists with a focus on European unification maintained an active participation of the new member states in the European Union's decision making processes. They claimed the institutional conditions for a strong influence in the E.U. what revealed, for instance, the Polish adherence to the Treaty of Nice.<sup>42</sup> Because Central European public intellectuals led these debates in historical terms, traditional national and regional meanings of Europe formed the contemporary collective memory and the attitudes towards integration. History and tradition became policy-relevant.

In the West of the continent, „Europe“ was mostly understood as an instrument of the institutional limitation of the nation, if not for its overcoming. Federalist thinking was a part of political cultures both in domestic politics and in foreign relations.<sup>43</sup> Here, a domestic demand for integration was the impetus for a European supra-nationality.<sup>44</sup> However, Central Europeans saw federalism as an instrument of strengthening the nation's influence in the international arena. Even popular "federal" ideas of the interwar period did not promote the delegation of sovereignty to supra-national institutions. The Central European federalisms are „interstate federalisms“.<sup>45</sup> In domestic politics, federalism was refused because here it was

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<sup>40</sup> Konwersatorium „Polska w Europie“, ed., *Europa Środkowa* [Central Europe], 2 vols., *Studium Kultury Chrześcijańskiej* (Warszawa: Kościół pod wezwaniem Świętej Trójcy w Warszawie, 1988).

<sup>41</sup> Pokój Międzynarodowy i Porozumienie Helsińskie. Ramowy Program Seminarium organizowanego przez ruch "Wolność i Pokój" w dniach 7., 8., 9. maja 1987 w Warszawie [International Peace and the Helsinki agreement. Programme of the seminar, organized by the Movement "Freedom and Peace"], *Biuletyn WiP* (1987).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Marek Cichocki, *Porwanie Europy* [The Kidnapping of Europe] (Kraków, Warszawa: OMP CSM, 2004).

<sup>43</sup> Michael Burgess, *Federalism and European Union. The building of Europe, 1950-2000* (London: Routledge, 2000).

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Andrew Moravcsik, *The choice for Europe. Social purpose and state power from Messina to Maastricht*, *Cornell studies in political economy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998).

<sup>45</sup> Vojtech Mastny, "The Historical Experience of Federalism in East Central Europe," *East European Politics and Societies* 14, no. 1 (2000).

seen as a threat to national sovereignty. Consequently, policies that reach beyond the own nation will not be understood as „domestic“.

In Central Europe, there is no tradition of multi-level governance that combines both supranational and intergovernmental approaches to integration. However, integration only succeeds if the vision of its desired political order resonates with former ideas that developed inside the involved nations.<sup>46</sup> In Central Europe, there is not the congruence between „Europe“ and the nation state as Alan Milward described it for the West European EC members that, in his opinion, pursued a „European rescue of the nation state“.<sup>47</sup> This makes up the missing link between Central European ideas of – mostly national – statehood and the supranational dimension of European integration. Thus, the „unusual new polity“<sup>48</sup> of the European Union and the singularity of its formation finds itself beyond the historically grown patterns of Central European political cultures.

This opposition did not only emerge in the politics of European integration. Research on the re-unification of Europe after 1989 shows congruent patterns. On the one hand, Western-initiated transition research focuses on the convergence of Central Europe towards the West in democratisation and marketisation processes. A broad range of literature has been published that measured the progress of the accession candidates towards the desired ideal in many fields. On the other hand, Central European research on political ideas points at the possible contribution of regional Europeanisms to European integration.<sup>49</sup> Central European historians stress the Europeanism of symbolic national and religious leaders.<sup>50</sup> The traditions of such Central European Europeanisms are mostly seen in the interwar period. Admittedly, both tendencies intermingled, and the dichotomy of “Western” or “Central European” origins of implicit norms changed into a co-existence of integrationist and regionalist approaches.

However, the described dividing line between East and West is blurred. In the historical perspective, pro-national Europeanisms appeared in the West of the continent as well. They

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<sup>46</sup> Martin Marcussen et al., "Constructing Europe? The evolution of French, British and German nation state identities," *Journal of European Public Policy* 6, no. 4 (1999).

<sup>47</sup> Even if Milward strongly opposes the explanations of Burgess and Gilbert as „myths, nurtured by federalists“, both interpretations have the strong link between Europe and the nations in common: Alan S. Milward, *The European rescue of the Nation-State* (London: Routledge, 1992), 119.

<sup>48</sup> Mark Gilbert, *Surpassing realism. The politics of European integration since 1945* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

<sup>49</sup> Ivan M. Havel and Dušan Třeštík, eds., *Co daly naše země Evropě a lidstvu. Část 3: Svobodný národ na prahu třetího tisíciletí* [What our Bohemian Countries gave to Europe and to Mankind. Part three: The Free Nation at the Threshold of the Third Millennium] (Praha: Evropský literární klub, 2000), Lane and Wolański, eds., *Poland and European Unity. Ideas and Reality*, František Mezihořák, *Evropanství a integrace* [Europeanism and Integration] (Olomouc: Nakladatelství Olomouc, 2003).

<sup>50</sup> Vladimír Goněk, *Za sjednocenou Evropu. Z myšlenek a programů Huberta Ripky* [For a United Europe. Thoughts and Programs of Hubert Ripka] (Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2004), Stanislava Kučerová, ed., *Českoslovenství, středoevropanství, evropanství 1918-1998. Úvahy, svědectví a fakta* [Czechoslovakness, Central Europeanness, and Europeanness 1918-1998. Deliberation, Testimony, and Facts] (Brno: Konvoj, 1998), Sławomir Sowiński and Radosław Zenderowski, *Europa drogą Kościoła. Jan Paweł II o Europie i europejskości* [Europe in the Means of the Church. John Paul II about Europe and Europeanness] (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 2003), Emil Voráček, ed., *T.G. Masaryk, idea demokracie a současné evropanství* [T.G. Masaryk, Ideas of Democracy and Contemporary Europeanness] (Praha: Filosofia, 2001).

mobilised for Europe from below, while anti-national Europeanisms advocated a construction of Europe „from the top“. <sup>51</sup> The case of Giuseppe Mazzini and the Italian *risorgimento* under the sign of Europe showed ambivalences of a pro-national European republicanism, such as the missing rejection of aggressive nationalism or the strong rootedness in national logics. <sup>52</sup> Even for the second half of the 20th century, the distinction between pro-national Europeanisms in the former East and a tendency towards supranationality in the former West is blurred. For the early postwar period, the „Europe of the nations“ of Charles de Gaulle retained intergovernmentalism and challenged the integration process. <sup>53</sup> This French dissonance between the nation and European integration was soon overcome. Nevertheless, there are national biases in the non-Eastern periphery of the EC as well, for instance, in Great Britain. And, at last, the political struggle in the national arenas can lead to intergovernmentalist predominance as it happened in Denmark. However, in the late Western cases the role of historical experience and of invented traditions is not as significant as in Central Europe.

European political debates about the future of the European Union reveal rare attention to regional traditions and hidden meanings of Europe in the new member countries. Negotiations are led in various group constellations under the conditions of day-to-day politics. The conflicting positions correspond with national traditions of thinking about Europe, but these are not always reflected. There is few sensitivity for regional peculiarities and national meanings of Europe beyond the own background. These circumstances make Central European framings of Europe a demanding legacy for the European integration. Managing diversity and assuring integration becomes more challenging.

## Conclusion

Central European discourses about Europe before 1989 do not only explain the public protest that led to the dismantling of the Eastern Bloc. Knowing more about them helps to understand contemporary representations of Europe. The breakdown of Europe's dividing line has not been accomplished by a consensus on the meaning of post-1989 Europe yet. After the enlargement, the controversy about the nation's place in Europe recaptured its significance. While narratives of cosmopolitan and multi-level European identities dominate in the western states of the European Union, there is a strong presence of regional and national – and often exclusive – Europeanisms in the new member countries of the European Union. Politicians of Central Europe exploited fear of integration <sup>54</sup> and reluctance towards the adaptation of

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<sup>51</sup> Ariane Chebel d'Appollonia, "European Nationalism and European Union," in *The Idea of Europe. From antiquity to the European Union*, ed. Anthony Pagden, *Woodrow Wilson Center series* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Because the author's concept of the construction of identity and community refers to Ernest Gellner, she uses the term of „European nationalism“ instead of Europeanism.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 182, 83.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Hans-Dieter Lucas, *Europa vom Atlantik bis zum Ural? Europapolitik und Europadenken im Frankreich der Ära de Gaulle (1958 - 1969)* [Europe from the Atlantic Ocean to the Ural? European Politics and European Thinking in de Gaulle's France], ed. Deutsches Historisches Institut (Bonn, Berlin: Bouvier, 1992).

<sup>54</sup> Václav Klaus, "Vytvořme jinou Evropskou unii [Let's Create an Other European Union]," *Lidové Noviny*, 18.7.2005.

Western European values.<sup>55</sup> This provoked not only a conflict of objectives between the “old” and the “new” member states in their integration policies. Essential and exclusive meanings of Europe set up obstacles for further debates about the future shape of the E.U. As a result, the European West regarded the new member countries as situated beyond a European “core”. However, the deepening of such a gap jeopardises the inner cohesion of the E.U. Instead, continuing east-west-debates about the future of Europe supports the development of a European public sphere and appreciates regional political cultures.

The relations between the old and new member states are in flux. Therefore it is not possible to explore the full consequences of the presented findings with the methods of contemporary history. Exclusive Europeanisms in Central Europe have always been challenged by counter-narratives. The resulting debates are lively and their outcomes are often surprising. Furthermore, essentialisms of Europe have traditions in the West of the continent as well. A gradual development in the present European political landscape leads away from a pure east-west dichotomy of national meanings of Europe, as I have described here in a heuristic reduction. The linkages of meanings of Europe between the nations and the European level are complex.<sup>56</sup> They are competing and pluralistic. In Central Europe and in the whole E.U. there are shifts between Europhoria and Europhobia as well as between integrationism and regionalism. Hence, it is early to estimate the impact of Central European meanings of Europe to the E.U. integration as a whole. But undoubtedly, the emergence of exclusive meanings of Europe in Central Europe challenges integration, migration, citizenship and governance in the present new European Union. It touches crucial common E.U. policies in foreign relations, security and law. Though great efforts have been made to transfer Western models to Central Europe, regional and national meanings of Europe are dominating Central European debates about the political and cultural future shape of continent. This finding poses a challenge for the E.U. politics of convergence and cultural integration.

There is a historical difference in integration objectives that generated an East-West difference in the „thinking of Europe“ and the considered paths of integration. The legacy of former mappings of Europe in the new member countries consists of a lower degree of transnationality and of scepticism towards supranational integration. There is a drift towards demarcating a European self and towards defining a collective in cultural terms. Central European claims of “belonging to Europe” followed this scheme and described the own nation as European. What are the consequences of a Europe-wide, intensified projection of national identities to a higher level? Which results provoke enhanced practices of negotiating European self-understandings in sharply defined collectives? The enlargement brought new and often narrow norms into the debate about European self-understandings and about the relations of the E.U. to its neighbouring cultures. Paradoxically, in a pluralised Europe of “Unity in Diversity”, new Central European essentialisms strengthen the forgotten old ones of the E.U. of the fifteen. The variety of national Europeanisms inside the Union blurs the *finalité* of the integration process as well as common international relation’s policies of the European Union. Inside the E.U., this trend strengthens the paradigm of neighbourhood vis-à-vis transnationalisation and unification. In the debates on the foreign relations of the Union,

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<sup>55</sup> Roman Giertych, "Przemówienie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej w nieformalnym spotkaniu ministrów edukacji państw europejskich [Speech of the minister of National Education at the informal meeting of the ministers of education of the European states]," (Heidelberg, 1.3.2007, in the author's archive).

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Chebel d'Appollonia, "European Nationalism and European Union."

exponents of a homogeneous European identity address questions of self-demarkation and self-delimitation.