



MY EUROPEAN STORY



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My European story

*Reflections upon Europe from two groups of citizens:
one younger and the other older than 30 years*

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Introduction

The first idea of the ILEAC - Intergenerational Learning for a European Active Citizenship project dates back between the end of 2012 and the beginning of 2013, and it arose from some notes taken at a refresher course. The starting point was simple and, maybe, not so innovative. We decided in fact to design a transnational path, that could make two different worlds meet and cooperate. On one side, people who saw all the great steps of the European integration; on the other, people born or living in a Europe already united, with no borders and only one currency. In our idea, bringing together those two categories would have reinforced the sense of European citizenship and made more understandable the impact of Eu in the everyday life of citizens. The initial idea has developed through 2013, a crucial year for the European institutions. A decision of the European Parliament and of the European Council declared in fact 2013 the “European Year of Citizens”. An initiative that celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the Treaty of Maastricht.

After the development of the project basic structure, the Centre of Initiative for Europe started working on the partnership, involving the European Association for the Education of the Adults (EAEA), a European NGO that includes 123 organisations coming from 42 different states, all working in the adult education sector. The C.I.E. brought its experience in the organisation of information activities as well as training sessions on European citizens and rights, while EAEA provided a selection of interested partners and developed an effective dissemination plan.

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The partnership grew fast, involving solid organisations with a great experience in the fields of non formal education, active citizenship and intergenerational dialogue: Eurocircle from Marseille; the International Platform for Citizen Participation of Plovdiv; the Centre for Civic Education of Podgorica; Socialna Akademija of Ljubljana and Vimmerby Folkhögskola of Vimmerby.

Five precious partners based in five different states. A selection that includes countries with different levels of European integration: two founding members of the Ue (Italy and France), three member states that entered the Union in farther (Sweden) or closest (Slovenia and Bulgaria) times, and a state (Montenegro) that is in the negotiation phase. Lots of differences among them, that we wanted to underline and not hide, because we think that cultural diversity is an enriching element, an added value instead of a limitation.

During the 18 months of activities a lot of tasks have been successfully completed, in particular:

- the organisation of six intergenerational workshops, with the participation of more than 300 people in six countries. Meetings in which citizens, especially under-30 and over-60, shared life experiences, personal testimonies and individual pathways that crossed the great steps of European integration.
 - the organisation of six workshops, with the participation of more than 150 people in six countries. Meetings in which citizens, especially under-30 and over-60, have worked together, discussed issues related to European citizenship, learned through practical simulations how the European institutions work.
 - the development of an intergenerational training module in English, made available on the project website and on the partner ones, which contains methodology and practical tips to allow an easy repetition of seminars and workshops on a larger scale.
 - the development of a website (www.ileac.eu), where it is possible to find: updates on the progress of the various phases of the project; materials produced by the activities; an agenda of appointments.
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- the organisation of six story contests, in each of the country involved. All the citizens of those countries, especially under-30 and over-60, were invited to send a written text (an essay, a short story or an interview), which offered the author's perception of EU policies, European citizenship and the impact Europe has on citizens' daily life. Keywords were: inter-generational dialogue, memory preservation, overcoming of stereotypes and prejudices. Among the more than 300 texts we received, the partners chose the best ones, which are now included in this publication, both in the original language and English.

ILEAC will end on November 11th 2014, with an international conference in Turin. The final event will be a useful opportunity not only to present the results of the project to an international audience, but also to tackle the issue of intergenerational dialogue in a 360° discussion. The meeting will involve local, national and European institutions, with a central role offered to the authors of the texts contained in this publication.

The ILEAC project ranked fourth out of 547 projects submitted from across Europe. The initial idea, hand-written on a notebook, has become a reality, setting the stage, mainly thanks to the online training module, to

allow the replication of the project even after the formal end of the activity.

The project ILEAC would not exist without the help and competence of Francesca Operti, project officer at the European Association for the Education of the Adults.

The project ILEAC would not have been a success without the help of Adriana, Alessandro, Alice, Antonella, Claudio, Federico, Flavio, Giulia, Luciano, Marta, Michele and Toni.

For the valuable work in the composition of this publication we thank Socialna Akademija.

MARCO ALFIERI

ILEAC project coordinator

Centre of Initiative for Europe



Europe matters



“My personal opinion is that the important debate is what kind of Europe we want to see. We see now that the anti-ethnic ideologies begin to converge. From both sides we are starting to hear proposals on how to overcome the crisis, how to tackle unemployment, particularly youth unemployment.

The statement “Europe is for others” is of course nonsense because, as EU citizens, Europe is our home. So we are right in the middle of it. Moreover many people feel that EU is a long way away, and this applies especially to the new members of pact. The aim of ILEAC Project is to become a bit more familiar with the European Union itself. You will admit soon that Europe — is us.”

OGNIAN ZLATEV

Head of the European Commission
Representation in Sofia, Bulgaria



“By taking part in this project, Montenegrin citizens have shown that the accession process has become an integral part of Montenegrin reality. The EU remains committed to supporting Montenegro on its road to the EU and these wonderful, creative stories prove that with its rich cultural and historical heritage Montenegro has much to contribute to the European Union’s cultural diversity.”

MITJA DROBNIČ

H.E. Ambassador
Head of the Delegation of the
European Union to Montenegro



“Being a European Citizen, this means: having your say in the European democracy; sharing a great area of freedom with 500 million Europeans; and addressing together the major challenges of our planet.”

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CYRIL ROBIN-CHAMPIGNEUL
Head of the Regional
representation of the European
Commission in France



“The meaning of ‘intergenerational learning’ is not only related to the transmission of memories. It is also a common and bi-directional path, made of words and languages, able to transform, complete, and even correct the memories of every person. It is something that is able to bring to light the active role (that can be smaller or wider), of each and every person, in the framework of the cultural and social changing that we call History. It is therefore something that can give back to the elderly the true meaning of their lives, while it offers to the youngsters the capacity to imagine the future.”

LUCIANO SCAGLIOTTI
President of the Centre of Initiative
for Europe



“The key idea of the founding fathers of Europe was and is respect for human dignity and doing things together. The need for a new European together continues to grow in the light of new challenges. In developing intergenerational dialogue and cooperation it is becoming clear that in the changed circumstances it will be necessary to consider anew what the first and second mean – both at an EU level and in the individual Member States. In recent years, new institutes, study programs, concrete intergenerational centres etc. have been created. We do not need intergenerational dialogue just because European society is aging or just because of older people. We always need cooperation and harmony between generations founded on respect for the dignity of all.”

LOJZE PETERLE
MEP for the European People's Party



“It is important with projects where people of different ages meet. Each generation has its history. Young people probably do not see the European Union as a peace project, peace for them is a given. It's important to have a European perspective. We develop through understanding and learning from our differences.”

KENT JOHANSSON
MEP for the Centre Party



*My story,
your story,
European story*

Story

Relations between older people and younger generations often include stories. Who has not experienced their granddad or grandma, great-aunt or uncle telling stories from their youth? Maybe a different one every time or perhaps always the same one; maybe an exciting story or perhaps boring because it has been repeated too many times, but always a firsthand, personal experience. People who have not had this experience are probably missing something in life.

However, stories are not told only by older people. Have you ever listened to a group of young people talking animatedly about a party they were at night before? What do they share? Stories! Or pupils back in school after the long summer holidays? The same.

Stories are so strongly rooted in our lives that we even find it hard to notice them sometimes. What, for example, do the media look for every day to increase their readership and income? Stories! What makes a good trademark? A story. What must happen on holiday to make us remember it for years to come? Stories.

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Not only individuals, communities too need stories

Communities too: families, groups of friends, learning groups, organisations and nations need stories for their existence. Without stories to hold us together, people are not a community but just a group of individuals. Without common stories, the bonds between us do not exist. The more common stories we have, the stronger the bonds between us. This connectedness can be beautiful or it can be difficult. It can be the fruit of love or conflicts, depending on past stories.

Some members of the community are involved in the stories more than others. Every story has its actors and its observers. An individual that is not involved in any story is socially isolated. A community is truly built by the actors and not the observers. It is important that the community allows every member to also be an actor. It is important that everyone is allowed to speak and act in a story.

A community with 500 million members?

The European Union also needs stories if it wishes to be a community. But do we have them? Symbols are the first thing that comes to mind: the European flag and the stories connected with it, the anthem, parliament, the common currency. However, stories must not just be condensed into symbols.

The founding stories of the European Union must be sought in the almost 70-year history of European integration that grew out of the ruins left in the wake of World War Two. The main actors in these stories are individuals that dreamt of peace and connectedness, unselfishly offering up their talents for the European idea, inspiring others and sometimes risking a great deal. Peace, the greatest achievement of the European Union, seems self-evident to most people, but this only proves how great this achievement is.

- 14 The stories gathered in this publication speak about different aspects of life in the European Union and beyond its borders. They speak about student life, education, violence, institutions, well-being, travel etc. Only a few stories speak about peace. If this kind of project was carried out immediately after World War Two, almost all of them would speak of peace. However, quite a large number of stories mention different aspects of the crisis: youth unemployment, the crisis in the euro zone, the growth in various populist movements. It seems that the crisis we are experiencing now could be an opportunity for new, important stories. But this will only be possible if we Europeans learn the right things from it and know how to step out of it stronger and more connected than we were before the crisis.

Biographical learning: learning from stories

Most Europeans, young and old alike, still find that the word “learning” has negative connotations. In our minds, learning is most often connected with school where we had to learn many things without knowing precisely why and whether they would ever prove useful in the future.

And yet learning is so natural and so undemanding that even small children can do it! The key to natural learning is the individual’s experience. The source of such learning is not the teacher or the textbook but the individual’s recent or distant past. We can learn most from what we have

truly experienced!

We call learning from our own biography, biographical learning. It is based on telling stories in a group, thinking about them and looking for similarities and differences between them. These are stories in which the main role is played by the narrator himself. They are coloured by his point of view, his personal perspective. If a number of such stories unite and become one, individual stories become collective history. Then the community becomes stronger.

Intercultural learning

This publication contains stories from very diverse locations. The narrators come from countries that World War Two did not affect as strongly as others, and also from countries that were hit not only by World War Two but also by the war in the Balkans. Two of the participating countries have been EU members for quite a long time; two of them have been members for a decade, one of them less, while Montenegro is not yet an EU member. The views on the EU, presented through these stories, are very different and it is hard to avoid feeling that it is the history of the environment they come from that is a key factor in this.

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It is important that representatives of different cultures come together and share stories amongst themselves! “What would it be like if I was born in Luxembourg?” wonders the hero of the story called Višnja, contributed by a representative of Montenegro. The context of the environment in which the individual grows up plays a key role in shaping his mental models.

Intergenerational learning

The world in which we are living is rapidly changing. Technological innovations are appearing at a faster rate than ever before. We are connected in a global village through which information travels at the speed of light. Information is freely available everywhere. However, as a result of the crisis, there are also increasingly rapid political, economic, ecological and social changes.

The words we use, the way we live, the work we do, the free time we enjoy are very different from 60 years ago. The fundamental needs remain the same but the ways they are fulfilled have changed greatly.

Each person is born into a certain time and their brains develop most intensively in the first few years of their life. These years determine to the greatest extent their words, their acts, their desires, their dreams. And when the stories of representatives of different generations come together, it as though each generation presented its own culture! We must really listen to each other a lot in order to be able to create a common story. In this way, the young Bulgarian speaks about a different attitude to work in recent years that she notices is a result of her country's EU membership. The Slovenian representative speaks about the significance of the state border in the 1980s and nowadays. The Italian representative speaks about how connotations of the word Europe have changed in the past 50 years. Such phenomena have a considerable effect on different generations and intergenerational exchanges are indispensable for building the community.

Active citizenship

- 16 An individual becomes an active citizen when they offer up some of their time and talents for the good of the community. When, together with others, they try to make into reality that which they dream of. When they decide to no longer be a "world user" but its co-creator. When they assume a leading role in the stories they are telling.

Active citizenship is a group process. The desires and wishes of the individual for a better world, must, if they are to be successful, find imitators. The stories of a number of individuals must unite into one in order to make a story of the future that the citizens will like.

In the European Union that is made up of over 500 million individuals, there are still enough undiscovered stories that could help make the European community more solid. There are enough individuals who gave their lives for the common peace and good of all Europeans. There are enough living talents who can change the world for the better. There is enough diversity for us all to enrich each other.

Will we know how?

But... *Will we all know how to tell our story?* During the course of the ILE-AC project we learnt that some people simply do not want to share their stories with others and thereby remain in a culture of silence.

Will we know how to listen to each other? Intercultural differences are sometimes still so great that contact between different representatives seems impossible.

Will we know how to merge the realities of different generations? Only in this way will we truly be able to capture the importance of the EU for the lives of its citizens in its entirety and from different perspectives.

Will we be able to dream of a better future? During the implementation of the ILEAC project we learnt that many people have already despaired.

And finally ... will we know how to achieve common stories and in this way help build the European Union as a home of different people who have joined forces for a better tomorrow for all?

MATEJ CEPIN

Director of Socialna akademija



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Thomas Guérin

FRANCE

Même les dieux parlent d'Europe

Une femme, assise dans les nuages, observait la Terre vue du ciel. Elle semblait admirative de ce qui se passait sur la planète bleue. Soudain, le tonnerre gronda. La femme se retourna brusquement et aperçut un taureau blanc marcher lentement vers elle.

— « Salut à toi, Europe ! dit le taureau en se métamorphosant en homme.

— Bonjour Zeus ! fit Europe en lui tournant le dos.

— Que fais-tu ici de si bonne heure ?

— Je contemple mon peuple se réveiller !

— Ton peuple ? Non Europe ! Tes peuples ! Ils sont encore au pluriel.

— Ou comme tu le veux Zeus. Ce que je sais c'est qu'ils sont unis dans la diversité !

Zeus se mit à ricaner.

— L'unité est impossible ! Ils n'y arriveront pas ! Ils sont trop faibles pour ça ! Ouvre les yeux, ils sont allés beaucoup trop vite. Leur volonté de battre les hommes du nouveau monde les aveuglent au point de commettre des erreurs impardonnables.

— Qu'entends-tu par erreurs impardonnables Zeus ? Je suis curieux d'entendre ton opinion ! »

Zeus se rapprocha de la princesse phénicienne et s'assied à côté d'elle. Il regarda à son tour l'Europe. Vu du ciel, Paris, Londres, Rome et toutes les villes qui les entouraient, formaient des tâches grises autour d'un vert illuminées par le Soleil.

— « Pour commencer, l'Union Européenne n'est pas ce qu'elle aurait voulu être. Elle s'appauvrit de plus en plus. La faute à la générosité sans doute, que font preuve les hommes ? Tous les peuples veulent plus ou moins rentrer dans cette union. Ce qu'ils ne savent pas, c'est qu'ils appauvrissent les pays les plus riches. A force de répondre favorablement à l'aide des plus démunis, les pays riches perdent de leur souveraineté et donnent toujours plus d'argent pour rattraper le retard des derniers arrivés ! Ils sont entrés dans une spirale.

— C'est... une forme d'entraide, Zeus !

— Non Europe ! Regarde mon ancien peuple ! Regarde Athènes, la cité de ma fille s'affaiblir ! Regarde en face les grecs. Ils n'ont plus d'argent. Je ne dis pas qu'ils ont beaucoup donné mais ils ont été à un moment affaibli. Et en

Even the gods talk about Europe

A woman was sitting in the clouds looking down on the Earth from the sky. She seemed to be admiring what was happening on the blue planet. Suddenly, there was the sound of thunder rolling. The woman spun around and saw a white bull coming slowly towards her.

— “Hi Europe!” said the bull, transforming into a man.

— “Hello Zeus!” answered Europe, as she turned her back to him.

— “What are you doing here so early?”

— “I am looking at my people...as they wake up!”

— “Your people? No, Europe! Your peoples! They are still many!”

— “Whatever you say, Zeus. All I know is that they are united in diversity!” Zeus sneered.

— “Unity is impossible! They will never achieve it! They are too weak! Open your eyes, they ran ahead of themselves. So blinded were they by their desire to beat the men in the New World that they committed unforgivable mistakes.”

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— “What do you mean by unforgivable mistakes, Zeus? I’m curious to hear you what your views are!”

Zeus moved over and sat beside the Phoenician princess. Then, he too looked down on Europe. From up in the sky, Paris, London, Rome and all the other surrounding cities looked like little grey specks illuminated by the sun, encircling a green area.

— “For starters, the European Union is not what it ideally wanted to be. It’s getting poorer and poorer. More than likely due to its excessive kindness. Everybody, more or less, wants to be a part of this union. What they don’t know is that they are impoverishing the richer countries. By continually providing aid to the less fortunate, the rich countries lose some of their sovereignty and give even more money to close the gap between the newcomers who are lagging behind! It’s a vicious cycle.”

— “It’s... a form of mutual assistance, Zeus!”

— “No Europe! Look at my ancient people! Look at Athens, my daughter’s city, look how weak it has gotten! Take a look at the Greeks. They have no money. I’m not saying that they gave a lot, but they were weakened at one time and partly due to this currency...”

— “The Euro is good thing about these countries!” protested Europe as she

partie à cause de cette monnaie...

— L'euro est tout ce qu'il a de bon entre ces pays ! protesta Europe en se levant. C'est l'Europe dans la poche du citoyen !

— Faux ! C'est elle qui engendre la pauvreté ! Quand des peuples adoptent l'euro, ils doivent faire face à une monnaie plus forte que celle qu'ils utilisaient auparavant. Tout devient plus dur !

— Tu es peut-être dans le vrai, mais ne me dis pas que c'est la seule raison qui te pousse à être contre l'Union Européenne ?

— Ma pauvre Europe, ce n'est heureusement pas la seule raison. Je pense également que les peuples sont en train de perdre ce qu'ils avaient acquis au fil de l'Histoire : la voix ! Ils ne décident rien. Ils ne savent plus rien et se sentent encore moins concernés par ce qui se décide à Bruxelles.

— Comment ça ?

— Le 9 Mai, cela te dit quelque chose ?

— Oui, la journée de l'Europe ! Pourquoi me demandes-tu cela ?

— Et bien demandes à tous les européens s'ils savent à quoi correspond ce jour ! Tu risques d'être surprise ! Ils ne savent même pas que le 25 mai, ils devront aller voter. Les citoyens sont plus intéressés par des problèmes nationaux comme le chômage (comme ils appellent ça) ou savoir qui leur président fréquente en douce la nuit au lieu de gouverner le pays en crise.

— Cela me rappelle vaguement quelqu'un Zeus ! dit Europe en souriant

— Je suis le roi des dieux, je fais ce qu'il me plaît ! Bref, prenons l'exemple des français, comme je l'ai dit plus haut, accepteraient-ils de laisser tomber le drapeau bleu-blanc-rouge et la Marseillaise pour un drapeau bleu avec des étoiles jaunes et une ode à la joie ? Je ne pense pas. De plus, les lois ne sont pas les mêmes pour tous les pays, les charges et les impôts non plus. Et sur le plan militaire, La France part sur des conflits comme cela a été le cas au Mali sans appui réel de l'Europe. Ils étaient seuls. Donc je ne pense pas que la mentalité des européens soit compatible avec leur union.

— C'est un point de vue, mais je sais que tu as tort Zeus !

— Ah oui, je serai curieux d'entendre ce que tu as à répondre sur ce sujet ma chère Europe !

— Oh je n'ai pas grand-chose à dire. Si nous remontons à la source de cette union, nous pouvons voir que l'association de ces pays est une réussite puisqu'il n'y a plus de guerre entre les nations européennes. Ce qu'ils voulaient à la base, c'était la paix.

— Ils auraient dû en rester là !

— Mais ils ont voulu aller plus loin, et c'était dans leur nature de le faire. Il y a eu la libre circulation des biens et des personnes et l'ouverture des frontières. C'est merveilleux que des peuples n'ayant pas la même culture

got up. "It is Europe in each citizen's pocket!"

— "Wrong! The Euro is what is causing poverty! When a country adopts the Euro, it is confronted with a currency that is stronger than what it had before. Everything becomes harder!"

— "You may be right, but don't tell me that's the only reason you are against the European Union?"

— "My poor Europe, luckily that's not the only reason. I also believe that the various European peoples are losing what they gained throughout History: their voice! They are not involved in any decisions. They don't know what's going on anymore and they seem even less concerned by the decisions that are made in Brussels."

— "What do you mean?"

— "May 9, does that date mean anything to you?"

— "Yes, it's Europe Day! Why do you ask?"

— "Well, ask any European if he or she knows what day that is! You may be in for a big surprise! They don't even know that they are supposed to vote on May 25. European citizens are more interested in national problems like unemployment (that's what they call it) or to find out who their President is seeing on the quiet at nights instead of governing a country in crisis."

— "That reminds me vaguely of someone, Zeus!" said Europe smiling

— "I am the king of the gods, I do what I want! Let's look at the French for example, as I mentioned earlier, do you think they would accept to exchange their blue, white and red flag and their national anthem for a blue flag with yellow stars and "Ode to Joy"? I don't think so. Furthermore, the laws are not the same in every country, neither are the taxes and duties. And from a military perspective, France intervenes in conflicts, like in Mali for instance, without any real support from Europe. It was alone. Therefore, I do not believe that the mentality of the European people is compatible with their union."

— "That's your belief Zeus, but I know that you are wrong!"

— "Really, I would love to hear what you have to say on the topic my dear Europe!"

— "Oh, I don't have much to say. If we go back to the reason this union was formed, we will see that the association of these countries is a success because there are no longer any wars between European nations. Originally, what they wanted was peace."

— "They should have left it at that!"

— "However, they wanted to take things further as is their nature. Next, there was free movement of goods and people as well as open borders. It's wonderful that people who don't have the same culture can share and ex-

puissent partager et échanger entre eux. Ils ont fait un effort considérable et cela a payé. Au fil des années, des pays ont voulu partager et s'associer à ceux qui avaient déjà fait un premier pas et l'Union Européenne est née. Elle n'a cessé de s'élargir depuis. De plus, il y a un respect des droits de l'homme...

— Oui c'est vrai ! mais... et cette monnaie ?

— La monnaie a été la conséquence de cette union. Ils ont voulu faciliter les échanges, la liberté des peuples. Il y avait des contraintes avant pour marchander. L'euro a simplement détruit cette contrainte. Et puis elle fait concurrence au dollar !

— Mais...

— Mais ce sont des hommes qui travaillent. Et les hommes sont imparfaits. On n'y peut rien Zeus. Ils font des fautes, parfois grosses, mais ils apprennent énormément au fil du temps et ne refont plus les mêmes erreurs qu'ils auraient commises par le passé. Ils ont, par ailleurs fait un progrès considérable. C'est la première fois dans l'Histoire de l'humanité que les hommes ont déclaré faire la paix au lieu de faire la guerre pour conquérir de nouvelles terres. Ils ont pacifié un continent coutumier des guerres. Regarde notre peuple grec, il a longtemps dominé le continent avant de laisser sa place à l'Empire Romain. Cela a été de même avec Charlemagne et Napoléon. Tous ont un point commun, ils ont conquis l'Europe, mais en ayant versé le sang humain. Aujourd'hui c'est le contraire.

— C'est vrai tu as raison. Peut-être suis-je trop dur ! Je me rappelle, après le congrès de Vienne, il y a eu les deux guerres mondiales dont le berceau était l'Europe. A la fin, les hommes ont muri et ont compris qu'il ne fallait pas s'enliser dans des conflits.

— Voilà ! Je voudrais juste rajouter quelque chose Zeus ! Tu as dit quelque chose de faux tout à l'heure ! Les hommes ne vont pas vite ! Cela fait six décennies qu'ils se battent pour promouvoir la paix, la réconciliation, la démocratie et les droits de l'homme. C'est à ce titre qu'ils ont reçu en 2012 le prix Nobel de la paix ! Mais laissons les travailler, regardons les faire et admirons leurs ténacités. Tu es d'accord ?

— Entendu ! Tu as gagné Europe, pour cette fois ! Mais je ne serai jamais totalement indulgent avec eux ! Ils m'ont trop souvent déçu ! »

A ces mots, Zeus s'en alla sans dire au-revoir à Europe. Il reprit la forme d'un taureau blanc et disparut. Europe resta silencieuse un moment puis s'en alla également. Se retournant une dernière fois en regardant son peuple:

— « Courage ! J'ai confiance en toi et n'oublie pas que « l'Europe ne se fera pas d'un coup » ! (R. Schuman)

change together. They made a considerable effort and it has paid off. Over the years, other countries have wanted to take part in and associate with those who had already made the first step and the European Union was formed. Since then, it has continued to expand. In addition, they respect human rights...”

— “Yes, that’s true! But... what about the currency?”

— “The currency was brought about by this union. Their aim was to make exchanges easier, to give the people more freedom. There were many trade constraints before. The Euro did away with those constraints, purely and simply. And it competes with the US dollar!”

— “But...”

— “Nevertheless they are mere humans who are making an effort and humans are not perfect. We can’t change that, Zeus. They make mistakes, sometimes really big ones, but they learn a lot over time and do not make the same mistakes they did in the past. Moreover, they have made considerable progress. It is the first time in the history of humanity that people have made peace instead of fighting to conquer new land. They have brought peace to a continent that was used to wage wars. Look at our Greek people. They dominated the continent for a long time before the Roman empire took over. This was the same with Charlemagne and Napoleon. They all have one thing in common; they all conquered Europe and shed human blood in the process. At present, this is not the case.”

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— “You are right. Maybe I am being too hard! I remember after the Congress of Vienna, there were two world wars that erupted in Europe. In the end, people matured and came to the realization that no good came of these conflicts”

— “That’s it! I just want to add one more thing, Zeus! You said something earlier that was false! Europeans don’t move too quickly! It’s been six decades since they have been working to promote peace, reconciliation, democracy and human rights. That is why the EU was awarded the 2012 Nobel peace prize! Let us watch them work, observe the way they do things and admire their tenacity. Agreed?”

— “Agreed! You won this time, Europe! But I will not be completely indulgent with them, they have disappointed me too many times!”

With these words, Zeus went away without saying goodbye to Europe. He changed back into a white bull and disappeared. Europe stood quietly for a moment; then she too started to leave. She turned around one last time and looked at her people:

— “Faint not Europeans! I believe in you and don’t forget, in the words of Robert Schuman “Europe will not be built overnight”.



+30

Fanny Bourneuf

FRANCE

Les nuages européens

Ma mère m'avait, une fois de plus, énervé. Je lui avais demandé ce que représentait l'Europe à ses yeux.

Ce n'est pas le genre de questions que je me pose à longueur de journée. N'allez pas croire que je suis un de ces enfants précoces survoltés. Non, je suis juste Nathan, élève de seconde au lycée Fermin et à qui le vieux professeur d'Allemand, Mr Wolf, avait demandé de faire une rédaction sur l'Europe. Comme j'avais vraiment très peu d'idées sur le sujet, j'étais allé poser la question à ma mère. En guise de réponse, j'obtins : « Et pour toi, qu'est-ce que l'Europe représente vraiment ? » Elle m'avait mis KO. Dans l'urgence, je n'avais trouvé qu'une médiocre réponse à lui opposer. Ma mère n'avait pas été dupe et m'avait renvoyé devant ma feuille blanche. La poisse.

Le soleil brillait dehors et cela faisait déjà bientôt deux heures que je lisais en diagonale, sur internet, des textes rébarbatifs sur l'Europe. En moins de deux, je me retrouvai, dans mon jardin secret, le pré voisin à regarder les nuages défilier, les parant de formes toujours changeantes. Parfois un nuage en rencontrait un autre. Ils fusionnaient puis se désagrégeaient en deux satellites zéphyriens, solitaires mais toujours libres. Cependant, aujourd'hui, mon esprit, tarauté par cette question d'Europe, manquait de créativité. L'idée que ce sujet était sensible chez moi me traversa l'esprit et me rendit hilare. Je dois bien concéder que ma grand-mère me répétait régulièrement que j'étais très chanceux de vivre dans l'Europe car, je pourrais, comme ma mère avant moi, profiter du fameux programme Erasmus pour prendre la poudre d'escampette et m'en mettre plein les mirettes alors qu'elle n'avait connu que la grisaille d'Abécourt. Elle disait que j'aurais l'occasion de parler des langues étrangères et rencontrer des gens de nationalités différentes et extravagantes alors qu'elle n'avait eu que des amies françaises. Je devais avouer, que vu sous cet angle-là, le mot Europe faisait pétiller des petites bulles de plaisir dans mon sang. Et mamie, la bonté incarnée, qui avait assisté au match maman versus Nathan, n'avait-elle pas tenté de m'aider en me glissant que l'hymne Européen était l'Ode à la joie? Joie, plaisir, sonnaient doux comme du velours à mes oreilles. Mamie m'avait même relaté cette anecdote rigolote où maman avait fait un gros couac à la flûte à bec alors qu'elle avait été désignée par son maître de CM2 pour jouer et enchaîner, sans transition, La Marseillaise suivie de l'Ode à

European clouds

Once again, my mother had gotten on my nerves. I had asked her what Europe represented for her.

I don't go around asking that kind of question every day. Don't start thinking that I'm one of those over-excited, mature children. Not at all, I'm just Nathan, a senior at Fermin High School whose German teacher, Mr Wolf, had asked him to write an essay about Europe. I didn't have any clear cut ideas on the topic, so I'd asked my mother for her views. Her reply was to ask me the question: "What does Europe represent for you?" I was totally floored by her question. I hurriedly came up with a poor answer and my mother, far from impressed, had sent me to go ponder over it and write down my answer. Bummer!

• 28

It was sunny outside and I had been online skimming through boring articles on Europe for over two hours. Before I knew it, I was sky-gazing in my secret garden, a nearby meadow. I stared at the clouds floating by, watching them as they countlessly changed forms. Sometimes, two clouds would come together, mate into one, and then break apart into two zephyrous satellites, alone and free. Today, my mind was tormented by thoughts of Europe and lacked creativity. It struck me that Europe might be a sensitive topic for me and I scoffed at the idea. I have to admit that my grandmother constantly repeated to me how lucky I was to live in Europe as I, like my mother, am able to take advantage of the well-known Erasmus programme to travel and see the sites whereas all she'd known all her life was the dreariness of Abecourt. She told me that I would get to speak foreign languages and meet people of different and fascinating nationalities whilst she'd only had French friends. I must say that viewed from that perspective, the word Europe sent little bolts of excitement through me. My wonderful grandma had witnessed my little bout with my mother and had tried to help me by sneaking to me that the EU anthem was "Ode to Joy". Joy and pleasure, both words were music to my ears. My Grandma had even told me this funny story about how one cold November 11 when my mother was in 5th grade, her teacher had called on her to play both the French and the EU anthems on the recorder, back to back, without transition. My mother had made a blunder and played a wrong note. There was no doubt that the marvellous sounds of Ode to Joy cast a cloud on the glorious days of the hot-headed citizens lurking in the French national

la joie, un certain onze novembre glacial. Il ne faisait aucun doute que le majestueux fil sonore divin de l'Ode à la joie assombrissait les glorieux jours des impétueux citoyens tapis dans La Marseillaise. Il était temps de trouver un hymne national en symbiose avec celui européen où la violence cédait le pas à la joie. C'est le moment que choisit Radio Critique pour se mettre en route, là-haut, dans mon cerveau, toujours au moment où quelques idées positives et promptes à accoucher de quelques lignes jaillissaient : « Toutes ces réflexions philosophiques ne concernent pas du concret, seulement une chanson, une vulgaire parade tout au plus. Sois pragmatique mon gars, sans quoi ta page va rester blanche. » Radio Critique avait peut-être raison, après tout, car l'enthousiaste pro-européen de ma mère et, même, de mamie, à un degré moindre, contrastait avec l'interprétation nébuleuse que je me faisais des articles parcourus sur internet. Il y avait bien plus qu'un sillon entre les deux, il y avait un fossé qui avait encore récemment été abreuvé de sang. Dans les Balkans, dans la révolte meurtrière des Stambouliotes et des Ukrainiens, dans les révoltes éclatant en Grèce et ailleurs... Les révoltes et conflits reprenaient du poil de la bête aux quatre coins de l'Europe qui devait être très vigilante et défendre ses valeurs originelles en combattant les inégalités massives, la violation des droits et la violence. Alors que mon esprit tournait à plein régime, mes yeux se remirent à modeler les nuages. Se dessina lentement mais inexorablement la carte de l'Europe en nuage. Je crus un instant perdre la raison mais c'était bien les contours de la carte de l'Europe en tout point égal à celle d'internet. Une pensée fugace traversa mon esprit : est-ce que Teresa, ma petite amie italienne, rencontrée l'été dernier à Rome, voyait le même nuage que moi ? Je devais vraiment être sous l'emprise d'une hallucination pour voir de telles choses et pour avoir de telles pensées scientifiquement erronées. Cependant la carte me narguait toujours dans le ciel. C'était bien la première fois que mes préoccupations scolaires imprégnaient, de leur venin, les nuages protéiformes de mon monde imaginaire ! Je ne pouvais pas fuir devant cette réalité envahissante. Il devait bien y avoir une signification à tout cela. Mais laquelle ?

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Exténué d'avoir tant réfléchi, je m'endormis. Mes rêves furent chaotiques et violents. Ma mère, plutôt peureuse et émotive d'ordinaire que courageuse et volontaire, enjambait le mur de Berlin, encouragée par une foule unie par une même soif de liberté. Elle arrachait un bout du mur de la honte et le brandissait comme un étendard. L'instant d'après, je me retrouvais en cours d'allemand, avec Mr Wolf qui était exécrable, ce jour-là, et collait les élèves, à tour de bras, sans raison aucune. Sans transition, je

anthem. It was time to find a new national anthem that was more in sync with the European one, where violence gave way to joy. It was just then that “Conscience FM” came on in my head, just at the time when I’d had a few positive ideas that could have led to my first paragraph: “All these philosophical reflections are abstract, they aren’t about anything real. It’s only a song, a mere show at best. Be pragmatic man or else you’ll turn in a blank page.” Maybe “Conscience FM” was right, the pro-European enthusiasm of my mother, and even my grandmother, to a lesser extent contrasted with the nebulous interpretation I had made of the articles I had read online. There was more than just a furrow between the two; there was a gulf that had recently been watered with blood. In the Balkans, the deadly riots in Istanbul and in the Ukraine, in the riots breaking out in Greece and elsewhere. Riots and conflicts were starting up again all over Europe. Europe needs to be very vigilant. It needs to return to its original values, fighting against massive inequalities, breaches of human rights and violence. Whilst my mind was churning with ideas, my eyes started to shape the clouds again. Slowly but surely a cloud shaped into the map of Europe. For one minute I thought I was going crazy, but there I was, looking at the map of Europe that was identical to the one I had seen online. A fleeting thought crossed my mind: Was Teresa, my Italian girlfriend whom I had met last summer in Rome, seeing the same cloud I was? I must really have been hallucinating to be seeing such things and having such scientifically impossible thoughts. Nevertheless, the map was still taunting me in the sky. It was the first time that my academic concerns had cast a stain on the shape-shifting clouds of my imaginary world. I could not run from this overwhelming reality. There must be a meaning to all this; but what?

I fell asleep, exhausted after all that thinking. My dreams were chaotic and violent. My usually fearful and emotional mother courageously climbed over the Berlin wall, cheered on by a crowd of people sharing the same thirst for freedom. She tore off a piece of the wall of shame and held it up like a trophy. The next minute, I found myself in German class. Mr. Wolf was being awful that day and kept punishing one pupil after another for no reason. Then, without any warning, I was fighting with the Ukrainians who were demanding to enjoy the same rights and freedoms that I have: the right to express themselves, to come together, to travel, meet people and exchange ideas. At the same time, my best friend left for the east of Turkey to support the jihad in Syria. I watched in shock as he blew himself up in a suicide bombing. I woke up bathed in sweat and screaming. Just before I got up to leave this now frightening meadow, I glimpsed one last

luttait avec les Ukrainiens qui réclamaient leur droit de jouir des mêmes libertés que moi : s'exprimer, se réunir, voyager et échanger. Mon meilleur ami rejoignait, au même moment, l'est de la Turquie pour rallier le djihad en Syrie. Ahuri, je le voyais se faire exploser dans un attentat suicide. Je me réveillai trempé de sueur et hurlant. Juste avant de me lever pour quitter ce pré devenu angoissant, mes yeux croisèrent un dernier nuage en forme de V qui en frôlait un autre, étrangeté rond. Je n'y prêtais guère attention. J'avais froid et rentraï, décidé à reformuler ma question à ma mère ou à mamie. La première personne que je croisai fut cette dernière, visiblement perturbée, qui me dit aussitôt :

« Où étais-tu ? J'allais commencer à m'inquiéter. Ce n'est pas sympa de partir comme cela sans prévenir.

— Je suis désolé, j'étais parti marcher et réfléchir. »

Je me dirigeai vers ma chambre quand j'entendis ma mère sangloter dans la cuisine. J'avais vraiment du m'absenter très longtemps et elle s'était affolée.

M'approchant d'elle, je dis :

« Je suis désolé.

— Tu es désolé de quoi ?

— ... d'être parti marcher sans prévenir.

— Je ne m'en étais même pas rendu compte.

— ... Qu'est ce qui se passe alors ?

— C'est une histoire dont j'ai honte depuis toujours et qui se termine mal aujourd'hui. Je vais te la raconter maintenant. De toute manière, tout le monde sera au courant demain au lycée. Ne m'interromps pas sinon je n'aurais pas la force de finir mon récit. Tu sais, Mr Wolf, ton professeur d'allemand, et bien, il a aussi été mon prof d'allemand. En 1989, il y avait des milliers de personnes en liesse près du mur qui tombait. (Mon rêve revint s'imprimer sur ma rétine et se superposer à son récit) A ce moment-là, je faisais la fête, en France, avec nos correspondants allemands qui exultèrent de joie à l'annonce de la nouvelle. Nous autres, les ados français, les observions sans vraiment comprendre l'ampleur de l'événement. C'est à ce moment-là qu'a germé notre plaisanterie. Avec deux copines, nous avons fait des graffitis sur un bout de béton que nous avons offert à Mr Wolf. Il a pleuré d'émotion en le recevant. On n'a jamais eu le courage de lui dire la vérité. Et bien, Nathalie vient de lui dévoiler le pot aux roses, me dénonçant et lui avouant que j'étais ta mère. Je viens d'apprendre qu'il s'est fait mettre en arrêt maladie, un mois, pour dépression ! »

J'étais partagé entre deux sentiments, le soulagement de ne pas avoir à

V-shaped cloud that was brushing against another strangely round cloud. I didn't pay much attention to it. I was cold so I got up and went inside. I was determined to rephrase my question to my mother or my grandmother. The first person I ran into was my grandmother who was clearly upset and who immediately asked me:

"Where were you? I was getting worried. It's not nice of you to leave like that without saying where you're going."

— "I'm sorry, I just went for a walk to think about a few things."

I was heading to my room when I heard my mother sobbing in the kitchen. I must have been gone for a very long time and apparently she had been worried out of her mind.

I went over to her and said:

— "I'm sorry".

— "Sorry for what?"

— "... for going out without letting you know where I was going."

— "I didn't even notice that you were gone."

— "What's wrong then?"

— "It's something that I've always been really ashamed of and it has got even worse now. I'm going to tell you about it; it's going to be all over school tomorrow anyway. Don't interrupt me because I don't think I'll have the strength to finish the story if you do. Your German teacher, Mr Wolf was my German teacher too. In 1989, there were thousands of people jubilant as the Berlin wall was coming down (my dream came back to me and intermixed with her tale). At the time, I was celebrating in France with our German correspondents who were rejoicing over the news. Teenagers at the time, we the French, didn't really understand the importance and magnitude of the event that we were witnessing. That's when two friends and I decided to play a little practical joke. We spray-painted a bit of concrete and offered it to Mr Wolf. He was moved to tears by our gift. We never got up the courage to tell him the truth, until now. Nathalie just spilled the beans, denouncing me and telling him that I was your mother. I just heard that he has taken a one-month sick leave for depression!"

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I was torn by two feelings, relief, on the one hand, because I wouldn't have to write the essay, and on the other hand, the shame that I was going to have to face at school. However, these self-centred musings soon gave way to an indistinct feeling and the day's events flashed through my mind. There was no doubt as to what the last two clouds represented; it was a dove going through the circle of the EU flag. "Conscience FM" was wrong. Symbols were very important and peace was not something to joke about.

faire cette rédaction et la honte que j'allais subir au lycée. Mais ces considérations égocentriques laissèrent rapidement place à un sentiment diffus et les événements de la journée défilèrent, en accéléré, devant mes yeux. Aucun doute sur les deux derniers nuages, c'était une colombe qui frôlait le rond du drapeau de l'Europe. Radio critique se trompait. Les symboles étaient très importants et il ne fallait pas plaisanter avec la paix.



-30

Flavio Bosso

ITALY

Europei senza esperienza

*E io lavoro solo per tenermi in vita
Sai cosa me ne frega dell'Europa unita?*
THE ZEN CIRCUS - POSTUMIA

Mancano pochi mesi alle elezioni europee e, come sempre, saranno interpretate dai partiti, sempre più distanti dalla realtà e dalle persone, come il solito esame nazionale, un semplice voto a favore o contro il governo in carica.

D'altra parte, i cittadini degli Stati nazionali - nota bene: "nazionali", non "europei" - si chiedono quale sia l'utilità di un voto che sembra aver perso progressivamente importanza. In Italia, in fondo, l'ultimo governo eletto risale al 2011, mentre le ultime elezioni si sono tenute nel 2013.

Eppure, quest'anno ci sono i presupposti perché questo evento acquisti un'importanza cruciale per il futuro dell'Europa e degli europei. Recentemente il professor Umberto Morelli, docente di Storia delle Relazioni Internazionali presso l'Università di Torino, aveva affermato che, se prima si parlava poco di Europa e tutti sembravano europeisti, ora, da quando è argomento permanente di discussione sulle prime pagine dei giornali, tutti sembrano essere diventati euroscettici.

È vero, in effetti, che mai come negli ultimi anni la volontà di allontanarsi dall'Unione è stata forte quanto oggi, quantomeno in Italia. Si pensi al "Basta euro" dei leghisti, che ha portato il partito secessionista ad accantonare l'utopica "Padania"; alla questione "immigrazione", con i paesi del sud-Europa sempre più soli ad affrontare i flussi di migranti in arrivo dall'Africa e dal Medio Oriente; e all'austerità, con cui sempre di più vengono identificate le istituzioni europee dai cittadini.

L'analisi del professor Morelli evidenzia una questione fondamentale: l'Europa, essendo ora al centro dell'attenzione, ha l'occasione di farsi conoscere, in particolare per quel che riguarda le straordinarie possibilità che offre ai propri cittadini, a cominciare da quella "pace perpetua", ipo-

European without experience

*And I work just to keep me alive
Who cares about the Europe united?*
THE ZEN CIRCUS – POSTUMIA

The forthcoming European elections will be, as always, used by political parties (which are getting more and more distant from citizens' daily life) as a national test, a vote pro or against the government in charge. On the other hand citizens of the national States – note: “national”, not “European” – are wondering about the meaning of an election that seems to have gradually lost importance. In Italy, as a matter of fact, the last elected government dates back to 2011, while the last elections were held in 2013.

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Nevertheless, there are some reasons that are making these elections a crucial crossroad for the future of both Europe and its citizens. Umberto Morelli, professor of History of International Relations at the University of Turin, recently remarked that in the past, when just a few people discussed about “Europe”, everyone seemed to be truly Europeans, while today Europe is an “hot topic” and everyone seems Euro-sceptic.

It is indeed true that the desire to leave the Union has never been stronger than today, at least in Italy. We can think about the “No Euro” slogan, claimed by the Lega Nord party (where Euro-scepticism replaced, in their agenda, the utopian secessionist dream of “Padania”); the migration issue involving Southern European countries, which feel alone in dealing with migrant flows from Africa and Middle East; and the austerity, often identified with the European institutions themselves.

But professor Morelli's analysis also highlights a fundamental issue: Europe is now in the spotlight and it has the opportunity to make itself well-known as well as to communicate the wide spectrum of opportunities it offers to its citizens. A starting point could be Immanuel Kant's “perpetual peace”, that seemed to become reality with the founding of the Europe Coal and Steel Community, the first step toward the United States of Europe. At the same time, however, the EU is accused of being the main

tizzata da Immanuel Kant, che sembrò diventare realtà con la nascita della Ceca (1951), il primo passo verso gli Stati Uniti d'Europa. Nello stesso tempo, però, l'Ue è accusata di essere proprio la causa del malessere della popolazione.

Se, da un lato, è certamente vero che l'Unione ha dei problemi relativi alle proprie istituzioni, è anche vero che spesso, anche nel recente passato, ha avuto difficoltà nel far conoscere i provvedimenti importanti che ha adottato. Un problema di comunicazione che, inevitabilmente, si riflette sulla percezione da parte dei cittadini e che forse non è ancora stato affrontato approfonditamente.

È molto interessante notare come partiti come il Front National di Marine Le Pen o il Movimento 5 Stelle, per citare un esempio di antieuropeismo "moderato", riescano a veicolare idee discutibili e, di fatto, irrealizzabili - un esempio è proprio la spinta a uscire dall'Euro - con grande successo. Gli antieuropeisti o euroscettici riescono, infatti, a fare presa sul malcontento popolare e non a caso vengono definiti populistici. Tuttavia, questo è solo uno dei motivi del successo di questi soggetti politici. Non va, infatti, sottovalutata la fortissima capacità comunicativa che li porta ad essere sempre al centro della scena, potendo così definire quali sono gli argomenti di discussione o, come la chiamerebbero i sociologi della comunicazione, l'"agenda setting".

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Di conseguenza, risulta piuttosto semplice far presa su persone che sono colpite dalla crisi e sono sempre più insofferenti, sia nei confronti di chi "viene a rubare il lavoro" o delle "direttive di Bruxelles", che sembrano sempre volte a sottrarre i pochi soldi risparmiati.

Una delle cause di questa ondata di insofferenza anti-europeista è da trovare proprio in quei media, la cui gestione, in Italia, è contestata da almeno trent'anni.

Da un lato, abbiamo dunque un gruppo molto ampio e, a dar retta ai sondaggi, in crescita, di persone che si sentono sempre meno europee, mentre, dall'altro lato, troviamo una serie di soggetti politici pronti a capitalizzare - anche mediaticamente - questo malcontento. In mezzo c'è l'Europa e chi continua a credere nel progetto di Altiero Spinelli e nel suo Manifesto.

Come fare, allora, a riprendersi gli europei o, meglio, a creare una forte identità europea?

cause of the suffering of the population.

On one hand, it is certainly true that EU must deal with some problems connected to its institutions, but it is also true that often, even in the recent past, it had difficulties in communicating the important measures it has adopted. Communication problems that are inevitably reflected on the citizens' perceptions, and have not been tackled properly so far.

It is interesting to underline that some political parties, such as Marie Le Pen's National Front or the Italian MoVimento Cinque Stelle (the latter being an example of moderate anti-Europeanism) are able to promote and spread with great success their controversial ideas, even if some of them are unlikely to be put in practice (such as the proposal of leaving the Euro).

The anti-European or Euro-sceptics are in fact able to ride the popular discontent, and are indeed defined "populists". However, this is just one of the reasons of their success. It should not be underestimated, in fact, the strong communication skills that helps them into the spotlight, making them able to settle the discussion agenda.

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It is therefore relatively easy for them to grip on people who are affected by the economic crisis and are more and more hostile against those who "come to steal the job" as well as against "Brussels directives", allegedly aimed at grabbing people's little savings.

One of the causes of this wave of anti-Europeanism, can be found in the media, an hot issue in the Italian politics since a couple of decades. While a large (and increasing, according to the latest polls) group of people feel less and less European, some parties were keen to capitalize this discontent. Between the two there is Europe and anyone who still believe in Altiero Spinelli's project and Manifesto.

How is therefore possible to rescue or create a strong European identity?

2013 "EU citizens Report" outcomes highlight some interesting elements, connected in particular to the Union's communication problems.

More than half of the interviewees declared to get information on citizenship rights via TV. The reason is not difficult to imagine: despite the tremendous increase in the use of social media (49% of the population, ac-

Leggendo i risultati della “Consultazione pubblica sulla cittadinanza dell’Unione” del 2013, si possono trovare degli spunti interessanti, in particolare per quel che riguarda il problema della comunicazione. Più della metà dei partecipanti alla consultazione aveva, infatti, dichiarato di voler ricevere le informazioni sui diritti del cittadino attraverso la TV. La ragione non è complicata da immaginare: nonostante la grandissima crescita dei social media (al 49% in questa consultazione), il piccolo schermo rimane il modo più comodo ed efficace per raggiungere tutte le persone, anche quelle che rischiano di essere maggiormente colpite dal digital divide, cioè gli anziani.

Grazie a strumenti già collaudati come l’Eurovision - che già trasmette il song contest, pur non essendo un organismo direttamente collegato all’Ue - e lo stesso canale Euronews (il canale ufficiale dell’Unione), si potrebbe trovare una chiave importante per raggiungere la popolazione europea e soprattutto fare una corretta informazione sulle decisioni dell’Unione e sul suo funzionamento.

L’importanza di un medium come la TV, anche come mezzo educativo, è dimostrata dalla storia: si potrebbe quasi dire che abbia fatto più Mike Bongiorno (ndr. Famoso presentatore italiano, considerato tra i padri fondatori della TV italiana) per la diffusione dell’italiano, che le riforme della scuola. Il compito dell’Unione è simile: promuovere un’identità europea attraverso mezzi e strumenti che siano in grado di raggiungere in modo semplice e chiaro l’intera cittadinanza.

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Al momento, invece, questo processo sembrerebbe coinvolgere solo le ultime generazioni e solo in parte: se moltissime sembrano essere le iniziative dell’Ue a favore dei giovani, meno viene fatto per le generazioni precedenti, con la logica conseguenza di allontanarle ulteriormente non solo dalle istituzioni europee ma da quella stessa idea di Europa come spazio di collaborazione e luogo in cui vivere in pace.

Eppure, anche per quel che riguarda l’educazione europea dei giovani, rimane ancora molto da fare. Tanti ragazzi, probabilmente, non conoscono o non comprendono a fondo l’utilità delle consultazioni europee, non solo per i motivi sopracitati legati allo scetticismo, ma anche a causa di una mancanza di formazione relativa al funzionamento dei vari organi europei.

According to the Report itself), broadcasting television is still the most convenient and effective way to reach people, in particular those groups with a broader digital divide, such as elderly. Eurovision (a non-EU channel already broadcasting an important song contest) and “Euronews” (EU’s official news channel) could be important tools to reach the European population and to inform citizens about EU’s decisions and functioning. The importance of a medium like the TV, which can be used as an educational instrument, is demonstrated by history: in Italy many say that Mike Bongiorno (a famous Italian anchorman, considered one of the founding fathers of Italian TV) did more in fighting illiteracy than the educational system itself. EU’s task is similar: to promote an European identity through means and instruments that are able to reach, in a simple and clear way, large sectors of the population.

At the moment, however, this process seems to involve only the younger generations, and only partially. With many EU initiatives targeting the youngsters, very little is left for older generations, which feel abandoned from the European institutions and from the very idea of Europe as a collaborative, peaceful space. Thus, also in the field of young people’s education, there is a lot to be done. Many youngsters probably do not know or fully understand the importance of European elections, not only for the aforementioned reasons, but also because they do not know how the European institutions work.

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EU’s efforts should be therefore addressed in that direction. In order to create a true European integration, it is crucial to improve communication and to teach citizens how the institutions work and which are the benefits - but also the disadvantages - of “being together”. Only a well-informed population will be able to make Europe starting over.

Lot of tools are in place to get this objective: it is the right time to use them.

Proprio in questo senso dovranno essere indirizzati gli sforzi dell'Unione per creare una vera integrazione europea, migliorando la comunicazione e insegnando ai propri cittadini il funzionamento e i vantaggi - ma anche gli svantaggi - dello "stare assieme". Solamente da una popolazione bene informata, sarà possibile far ripartire l'Europa.

Gli strumenti ci sono e sono molti: ora è il caso di usarli.



Toni Ferigo

ITALY

Che cosa mi ha insegnato l'Europa

Sono venuto al mondo subito dopo la guerra. La mia generazione è stata più volte “costretta” a pensare all'Europa: risorsa, speranza, necessità. Per diversi, purtroppo, è stata un problema, un pericolo, un'avversità. Spesso è stata “usata” politicamente per giustificare politiche nazionali e creare un nemico al quale dare colpe. Il populismo ha sempre bisogno di accusare qualcuno che sta “là fuori”, lontano dal popolo, diverso, contrario ai nostri interessi.

Per mia fortuna ho avuto l'occasione di incontrare persone, insegnanti, sindacalisti, religiosi di diverse tradizioni e anche politici, che mi hanno vaccinato contro questa malattia. A loro devo la fortuna di essermi sentito europeo, fin dalla giovinezza. Per dirla con un'espressione retorica, cittadino del mondo.

Il primo pensiero va a un insegnante di lettere e storia della scuola tecnica. La sua influenza su noi studenti dell'epoca è stata grande. Non a caso, molti suoi allievi hanno fatto una “vita attiva” - per citare la filosofa Hannah Arendt - nelle associazioni, nel sindacalismo e anche nell'impegno politico.

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Il quadro di fondo era quello dell'Italia post bellica. Si doveva ricostruire, non solo dal punto di vista economico, ma anche culturale. Per molti anziani dell'epoca, l'Europa si associava alle guerre, ai drammi famigliari, ai nazionalismi e, perché dimenticarlo, a fascismi, nazionalismi e dittature. Non era facile creare un nuovo clima, un diverso spirito del tempo, consapevole delle responsabilità del passato e orientato verso un futuro di pace, convivenza e progresso, in tutti i sensi.

In questo contesto un gruppo numeroso di persone si assunse questo difficile incarico e io ebbi, come detto, la fortuna di incontrarne diverse.

Ricordo le letture che il professore ci indicava: “Il diario dei condannati a morte della resistenza in Europa”; per non dimenticare che la resistenza al Nazi-fascismo fu europea; “La storia dell'idea d'Europa” di Federico Cha-

What Europe taught me

I was born right after the war. My generation has often been “forced” to think about Europe: as a resource, a hope, a need. Unfortunately, for many people it has been a problem, a danger, something hostile. Europe has often been “used” to justify national policies and to create an enemy to blame. Populism is always in need of accusing someone who is “out there”, someone that is far away from people, that is different, that is against our own interests.

Luckily, I had the opportunity to meet teachers, trade unionists, people with different religious beliefs and even politicians, and they “vaccinated” me against that poison. Since my youth I have always felt European or, to use a rhetorical expression, “citizen of the world” and I owe them for that. My first thought goes to a literature and history teacher from my technical school. At that time, his influence on me and my classmates was great. • 44 So it was no surprise that many of his pupils had experienced an “active life” - to quote the philosopher Hannah Arendt - getting committed into politics, associations and trade unions.

The background was post-war Italy. People had to rebuild the country, not only from the economic point of view, but also from the cultural one. For many elderly, Europe was associated with war, family dramas, nationalisms, and of course, to Nazism, Fascism and dictatorships. It was not easy to create a different spirit of the time, being aware of the responsibilities of the past and pointing towards a future of peace, coexistence and progress, in every sense.

In this context, a large group of people took on this difficult task, and as I said, I was lucky to meet some of them.

I remember our teacher’s reading suggestions: “The Diary of death row inmates of the resistance in Europe”, not to forget that the resistance to the Nazi-fascism had been a European matter; “The history of the idea of Europe” by Federico Chabod, a great historian of that time; “The long journey through Fascism” by Ruggero Zangrandi, a former fascist’s

bod, un grande storico di quel tempo; “Il lungo viaggio attraverso il fascismo” di Ruggero Zangrandi, la coraggiosa autocritica di un ex fascista.

A queste letture, cui seguivano discussioni e approfondimenti, si associarono quelle suggerite dai diversi ambienti in cui ci si trovava. Nel mio caso, essendo cresciuto in una famiglia cattolica, erano “i preti scomodi”: Don Primo Mazzolari, Dietrich Bonhoeffer e la Chiesa resistente in Germania, Emmanuel Mounier e molti altri. Tutti figli di una cultura europea.

Anche nel campo politico non mancarono i lungimiranti. I grandi leader di allora erano sinceramente europeisti. La ricostruzione era per loro un fatto non solo economico, ma anche politico e sociale. Occorrevano scelte decisive per fare un’Europa solidale, il miglior antidoto al pericolo nascosto nella ripetizione degli errori del passato.

Non è retorica ricordare che ci furono davvero dei “padri fondatori dell’Europa”, punto di riferimento per molti giovani. Nel luglio del 1952 fu fondata la CECA, Comunità Europea del Carbone e dell’Acciaio, con lo scopo di coordinare le politiche economiche riguardanti queste importanti materie prime, necessarie per la ricostruzione. Allora ero adolescente. La TV era privilegio di pochi, la guerra era appena finita e si respirava l’aria della guerra fredda. Non esisteva ancora una “opinione pubblica”. La CECA non fu solo un successo economico, ma anche politico. Inizialmente formata dai sei stati produttori di carbone e acciaio tra loro confinanti, tra cui la Germania e la Francia, storicamente avversarie per il controllo di risorse di carbone, divenne riferimento anche per l’Italia, che pure non primeggiava per la produzione d’acciaio e si trovava in una catastrofica situazione economica. Dietro l’aspetto puramente economico si nascondeva dunque la volontà di riunire i vecchi nemici ancora scioccati dagli orrori della Seconda Guerra Mondiale, controllando la produzione del carbone e dell’acciaio, le materie prime dell’industria bellica.

Nel 1957 nacque la CEE. Per noi arrivati all’impegno sociale negli anni Sessanta, il fatto che i diversi paesi collaborassero nel campo economico, era un fatto concreto. Si ricostruivano fabbriche, case, infrastrutture. Una nuova fase. Poi arrivarono il Concilio Vaticano II, la coesistenza pacifica, la fine dei colonialismi. Si cominciava a respirare un’altra aria, con la certezza che bisognasse andare avanti.

Io cominciai ad avere incarichi nel campo del lavoro. Iscritto alle ACLI

courageous self-criticism.

Other important authors followed these readings, discussions and analyses. In my case, raised in a Catholic family, I read the book of many “thorny priests” like Don Primo Mazzolari, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the resisting Church in Germany, Emmanuel Mounier, and many others. They were all children of a European culture.

Even in the political field there were many far-sighted men and women: the great leaders of that time were genuinely European. To them, Europe’s reconstruction concerned the political and social field as well as the economic one. To build an inclusive Europe, crucial decisions were needed - the best antidote against the risk of repeating past mistakes.

It is not rhetorical to remember that “Europe’s founding fathers” really existed. They were a reference point for many young people.

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The CECA (the European Coal and Steel Community) was founded in July 1952, with the aim of coordinating the economic policies related to these important raw materials needed for the reconstruction. I was a teenager, the TV was still the privilege of the few, the war had just ended and we breathed the air of the Cold War. A “public opinion” didn’t exist at that time. The CECA was not only a financial success, but also a political one. Founding members were the six States that produced coal and steel, among which Germany and France, historically opposed in the control of coal resources. Even if Italy did not stand out in the production of steel and was facing a catastrophic economic situation, CECA became a reference for the national politics. Besides the economic factor, there was a desire to get the old enemies (still shocked by the horrors of World War II) closer through the control of the production of coal and steel, the raw materials for the defence industry.

In 1957 came the EEC. As many of my peers, I was socially committed in the 60s and the fact that different countries started cooperating in the economic field was something real. Factories, homes and infrastructure were built again. A new phase was beginning, followed by the Second Vatican Council, a period of peaceful coexistence and the end of colonialism. People started to breathe a different kind of air, with the certainty that it was necessary to go on. I began to work. I was a member of the Italian Christian Workers’ Association, and then union activist: the adventure

(Associazioni Cristiane dei Lavoratori Italiani) e poi attivista nel sindacato: cominciava l'avventura che avrebbe caratterizzato la mia vita. La dimensione europea influenzò molto il mio modo di concepire l'azione sindacale. Nella CECA e poi alla CEE vi erano strumenti consultivi, con un certo peso nella CECA, di cui facevano parte le organizzazioni sindacali. Sentivo dirigenti che nei loro discorsi facevano riferimento a politiche europee. Nacque la CES, la Confederazione Sindacale Europea. Ritornavano a casa molti emigrati che portavano la loro esperienza sindacale in altri paesi. Cominciarono a formarsi coordinamenti europei nelle aziende multinazionali. Quando diventai responsabile del settore internazionale del sindacato metalmeccanici, l'Europa divenne la mia passione, alimentata dalla convinzione che fosse necessario e possibile fondare un vero sindacato europeo e che, attraverso l'esperienza e l'attività sindacale, fosse possibile diventare "cittadini europei". Lavoratori che attraverso la "contaminazione" tra le rispettive tradizioni e culture sindacali davano vita all'Europa del lavoro.

Fu un bel periodo. L'incontro con sindacalisti di ogni parte d'Europa, anche dell'Est, era non solo fonte di conoscenza reciproca, ma un'occasione di crescita personale. Aumentava la curiosità per le culture diverse, si scoprivano radici comuni, si usciva anche da un certo nazionalismo sindacale, nei rapporti tra europei e le altre parti del mondo. Si era spinti a imparare lingue straniere, a informarsi sugli avvenimenti in corso negli altri paesi, a concepire la solidarietà, valore storico del movimento operaio del '900, in un orizzonte ampio. Si sperava nella costruzione dell'Europa politica.

Insomma, gli insegnamenti ricevuti in gioventù parevano trovare realizzazione nella prassi. Inoltre, dopo aver assunto un incarico nella federazione internazionale sindacale, potevo rendermi conto che l'Europa, non i singoli stati, era il vero riferimento per molti sindacati, dopo la caduta del muro, la fine della guerra fredda e delle dittature, in molte parti del cosiddetto terzo mondo. Fu un periodo di scambi assai fecondo. Si ospitavano sindacalisti brasiliani, balcanici, arabi e di Europa si parlava molto, soprattutto per il suo modello sociale.

L'arrivo della globalizzazione ha certamente cambiato il quadro in cui si svolge l'azione sindacale. La crisi del 2008 la ha addirittura stravolta. L'Europa, tra molti lavoratori, non trova più grandi simpatie. Impazzano i populismi. Problemi nuovi ed enormi si sono affacciati sulla scena sinda-

that characterized my life was starting. The European dimension greatly influenced my way of thinking about the union actions: Union organizers became members of the advisory bodies in both CECA (where they had a bigger role) and EEC. In their speeches, managers talked about the European policies. At that time ETUC was born, the European Trade Union Confederation. Many expats returned home, taking back the union experience gained abroad. European bodies were established inside multinational companies. When I became Head of the International division in the Metalworkers' Union, Europe became my passion. I was fuelled by the belief that it was necessary and possible to establish a true European union and that, through experience and union activity, it was possible to become "Europeans". Also thanks to the melting pot between different traditions and union cultures, it was possible to give birth to a European idea of labour.

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It was a good period. Meeting with trade unionists from all over Europe, including Eastern Europe, was not only a source of mutual understanding, but also an opportunity for personal growth. The curiosity for different cultures increased as we discovered common roots. Italians abandoned a sort of union nationalism, opening up in the relations between Europe and the other parts of the world. We were driven to learn foreign languages and to find out about current events in other countries. We wanted to better understand the concept of solidarity, the historical value of the labour movement of the '900, and we wanted to do it in a broad horizon. We were looking forward for the construction of a political Europe.

Long story short, the teachings that I received in my youth seemed to be achieved thanks to practice. Also, after I got hired in the International Trade Union Federation, I could realize that the whole Europe, and not individual countries, was the true reference for many unions, especially after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of the Cold War and of the dictatorships in many parts the so-called Third World. It was a period of fruitful exchanges: we hosted Brazilian, Balkan and Arab trade unionists and we talked a lot of Europe, mainly about its social model.

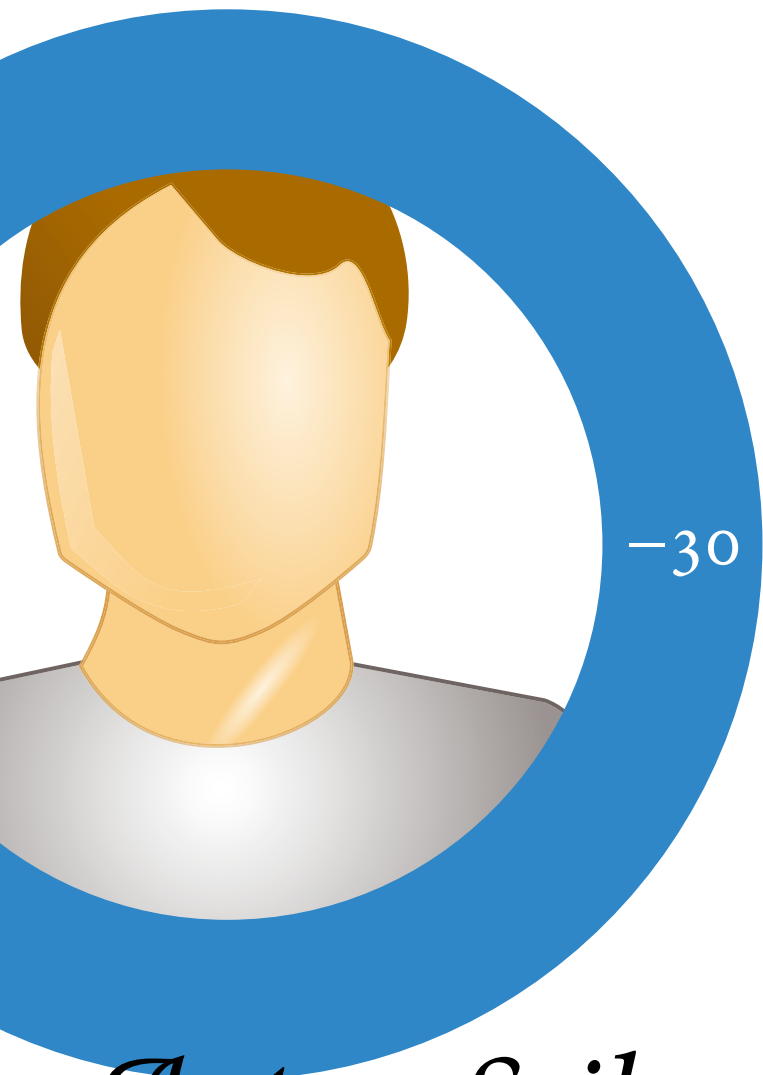
The arrival of globalization has certainly changed the context in which the industrial action takes place. 2008 crisis had a big impact. Many workers consider now Europe as an enemy. Populism is growing. Newer and huger problems are rising among trade unions. Political Europe is not yet a completed process; Nevertheless, we need more Europe in our lives.

cale. L'Europa politica stenta a nascere. Eppure di Europa c'è sempre più bisogno. I giovani viaggiano molto, si incontrano e si parlano sui social network. Certamente si sentono meno identificati con una cultura nazionale. Mi auguro che sappiano fare tesoro dell'esperienza di chi ha qualche anno in più. Che la nostra passione di un tempo si trasformi grazie a loro nella realizzazione di una Europa protagonista nelle vicende del mondo. Per questo, però, ci vuole impegno civile, formazione, curiosità, cultura all'altezza del tempo presente.

Insomma, l'ottimismo della volontà, che certamente non fu assente nel passato.

Young people travel a lot, they meet and speak through social networks. Certainly, they do not identify themselves with a national culture. I hope young people could treasure the experience of older generations. I hope that our past passion can turn into the real creation of a Europe that it is protagonist worldwide. To do this, however, it takes commitment, training, curiosity, and a knowledge that is up to date.

To conclude, we need the optimism of the will, that we certainly did not lack in the past.



-30

Anton Eriksson

SWEDEN

EU - ungdomars ointresse?

Val är för en del av oss unga totalt ointressant. EU-val mer så än riksdagsval. När man röstar fram ett parti i riksdagsvalet är det lättare att se produkten av det hela. Det kan hända att en ny gubbe eller gumma är statsminister och deras parti lovar en massa bra saker. Bra, tänker man, medan det finns kanske fem till partier som har bra idéer man skulle kunna tänka sig fokusera på. Istället måste man lägga hela sin röst på ett parti och hoppas de styr och ställer precis som man vill ha det.

EU-valet blir därmed som sagt mer ointressant. När många unga tänker kring EU tycker man det är kanonbra att man kan resa och bo var man vill inom EU. Och jag tror de flesta tänker att en ny gemensam valuta skulle väl vara smart om man reser mycket, men alldeles för krångligt att lära sig här hemma. Nej, usch för förändringar. Och själva idén om att det skulle kunna påverka landet negativt rent ekonomiskt ser man förbi, eller känner helt enkelt inte till.

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Kan det vara så att välfärden gör oss lata? Troligtvis. Vi behöver inte tänka på om vi ska vara med i EU eller inte. Vi har ju det bra som vi har det, eller? Jag kan sätta mig på tåget och glida ner till Prag utan att visa varken pass eller legitimation. Jag kan få en sovplats för en överkomlig peng och lite mat. Försöker jag kommunicera på Engelska så finns det mängder av folk som förstår mig. Men så kan jag ju också göra samma sak till Norge som inte är med i EU.

Att partier får platser i Europaparlamentet berör oss inte särskilt mycket heller. Bryr man sig inte om inrikes politik så kvittar då också EU:s politik. Just för att det inte känns som det gör oss någon skillnad. Man tycker inte vi har några större problem i Sverige. Bensinpriserna höjs men det gör ju också lönen, om man har ett jobb. Infrastrukturen kan väl tänkas vara dålig men ändå relativt bra. I det stora hela är nog den unga svensken rätt nöjd med Sverige. Och därför känner man inte något behov av att påverka vår politik. Åh, jag går väl och röstar på Miljöpartiet, för att värna om miljön tycker jag är viktigt. Eller så struntar jag i det och lägger några fler pussel på min smartphone, för det gör väl ingen skillnad ändå.

EU - young people's disinterest?

Elections are for some of us young people totally uninteresting. The European Parliament election more so than the general election. When you vote for a party in the general election it's easier to see the outcome of it all. There's a big chance that there's a new man or woman as prime minister and their party promises a lot of good things. Good, you may think, meanwhile there are maybe five other parties with other great ideas that you feel should get more attention. Instead you have to put your whole vote on a single party and hope they only do things you agree with.

The European Parliament election is therefore less interesting. When a lot of young people think about the European Union they might think it's awesome that you can travel and live wherever you want within it. And I think the majority of young people think a common currency would be useful if you travel a lot, but way too troublesome to learn at home. No, yuck to changes. And you look past the idea that maybe it would affect the country's economics negatively, or you just don't know it would.

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Can it be that wealth is making us lazy? Probably. We don't have to think about whether to be a part of the European Union or not. We're doing good as it is, don't we? I can step on a train and go to Prague without showing my passport nor ID. I can get a bed and some food for a sensible price. If I try to communicate in English the chance is big a lot of the people there will understand me. But then again, I can do the same trip to Norway that is not in the European Union.

The fact that parties get commissioned into the European Parliament doesn't affect us very much either. If you don't care about your country's politics, then why bother with it on a grander scale when it doesn't feel like it makes any difference? I don't think we feel like we have any major problems in Sweden. The gas prices are getting higher but so are the salaries, if you have a job that is. The infrastructure may seem bad but is still relatively good. Most young people in Sweden are probably quite content with their lives here. And because of that there's no need in trying to get one's voice heard in politics. Whatever, I'll just go vote for the Green Party, because taking care of our environment is a sensible thing to do. Or I'll just won't bother and stay at home solving some more puzzles in my smartphone. Because what does it matter?



Gun Ljungqvist

SWEDEN

EU- några tankar

Jag är född 1938 och började skolan 1945. Min tidigaste barndom inföll alltså under andra världskriget. Jag var nog väldigt omedveten om vad som försiggick. Världen var mycket liten, bestod egentligen mest av hemsocknen. I skolan vidgades den. Det fanns ett antal "finnbarn" som kommit till Sverige under kriget. I andra klass kom en flicka från Holland, som blev kvar som fosterbarn ett år, och världen blev ännu lite större. Så småningom fick man höra uttryck som kol- och stålunionen och Benelux-länderna, och tankarna kring EU växte fram. Som fredspröjekt var det en storartad idé. Gamla fiender som Frankrike, Tyskland och England har lärt sig samarbeta. Unionen växte, och nu kan man se att vi består av en yvig samling olika länder. Jag skulle önska att byråkraterna i Bryssel kunde inse att det är stor skillnad på att bedriva jordbruk i till exempel Italien och Sverige. Tänk bara på en sån idiotisk bestämmelse som att det bara får finnas ett visst antal träd per hektar betesmark. Det är väl skönt för korna att det finns någon skugga en het sommardag. En sak med EU, som påverkar vår familj i positiv riktning var när yngsta dottern blev erbjuden arbete på en reseagentur i Spanien. Det var bara att tacka ja, inget som helst krångel med arbetstillstånd etc. Hon kunde också få sjukvård på samma villkor som landets innevånare. EU är nog bra men ska inte bestämma om sådant som vi sköter bättre själva. Brottsbekämpning och miljöproblem är gränsöverskridande saker, men inte petitesser som storlek på jordgubbar. EMU, som Sverige lyckats hålla sig utanför, höll ju på att gå helt åt skogen. Alla länder måste hålla sig till spelreglerna.

Jag skulle önska att man fick mera seriös information om EU, kanske i stil med den Medborgarbok som min hemkommun delat ut till alla ungdomar på myndighetsdagen. Tidningsartiklar är nog inte alltid att lita på.

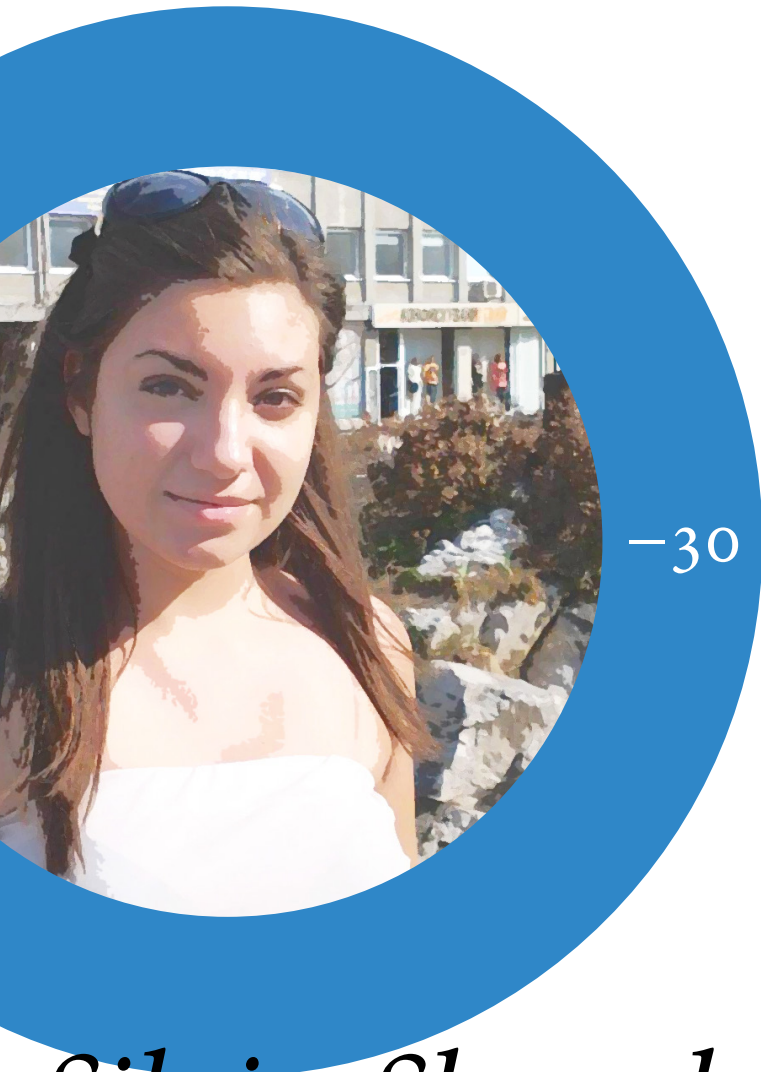
EU - some thoughts

I was born in 1938 and began school in 1945. My early years were therefore during World War II. I was probably very unaware of what really happened. The world was so small, stretching as far as the home parish. In school it widened. There were a couple of „Finn children“ who had migrated to Sweden during the war. In second grade came a girl from the Netherlands who stayed as a foster child for a year and the world grew even bigger with her. After a while you would hear expressions like coal- and steel union and the Benelux countries, and the thoughts around the European Union grew forth. As a peace project it was a grand idea. Old enemies like France, Germany and England had learnt to cooperate. The Union grew and now you can see that we consist of a rich collection of different countries. I wish that the bureaucrats in Brussels would realise that there's a big difference between managing agricultural in for example Italy and Sweden. Just think about the moronic regulations like the limited amount of trees that are allowed per hectare pasture. Would it not be good for the cows to have some shadow on a hot summer's day?

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One thing with the European Union that has affected our family in a positive way was when the youngest daughter was offered a job as a travel agent in Spain. She could just accept the offer and there were no trouble with work permits etc. She also got the same medical terms as the country's inhabitants. The European Union is probably good but should not decide on things we can manage better on our own. Crime fighting and environment issues should not be limited to single countries, but things like the size of strawberries are just niceties. The Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), which Sweden has managed to stay out of, was almost about to collapse. All countries have to keep with the rules of the game.

I wish we got more serious information about the European Union, maybe in line with the Citizens book my home municipality sent out to all young people on their 18th birthday. News articles are probably not always trustworthy.



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Silvia Shurubova

BULGARIA

Европа преди и след 1990 г.

90-те години на двадесети век са свързани с много промени, засягащи начина на живот на всички европейци, но най-вече от тези хора, които са от Централна и Източна Европа. Със залеза на комунизма всички стени, разделящи бившите социалистически страни се модернизират. България също е засегната в значителна степен от тези промени, което е причината да имаме проспериращ статут днес като пълноправен член на Европейския съюз.

След 1990 г. формирането на единен пазар с неговото свободно движение на стоки, услуги, хора и капитали е завършена система. В миналото в България пристигат много различни неща, произведени преди в Европа и били дефицит в миналото, сега могат да бъдат лесно закупени. Благодарение на чуждестранни компании, които се появиха в нашата страна, масовото производство и износ започна да расте. Създават се много нови работни места за българите. Днес също милиони млади хора учат в чужбина с помощта на Европейския съюз. Благодарение на това те могат свободно да избират своя собствена кариера и как да изкарват прехраната си.

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Европейският съюз е едно голямо семейство със своите модерни комуникации и сравнително лесно преминаване на границите без паспортен контрол.

Ние всички ме слушали на историите на нашите родители, баби и дядовци за времето преди 1990 година. Те са били на опашка за кило банани. Освен това, тези плодове са били достъпни само в част от големите магазини и само на празници. Свободният стокообмен е бил само мит за социалистическите страни което се дължи на факта, че липсата на стоки е била огромен проблем. След 1990 новите пазари станаха достъпни за нас и интензивния обмен на продукти започна. Това не само осигурява достъп на българите до различни стоки, но също така имаше положителен ефект върху нашата икономика. В днешно време на износа на традиционни български продукти като вина, розово масло и кисело мляко, които са високо ценени в цял свят, се извършва лесно. България има достъп не само до пазарите

Europe before and after 1990

The 90s of 20th century are connected with a lot of changes, affecting the way of life of all the Europeans but mostly of these people who are from Central and Eastern Europe. With the decline of communism all the walls separating the former socialist countries from the modernizing world fall, too. Bulgaria is also affected to a great extent by these changes which is the reason for the prosperous status of our home country today as a full member of the European Union.

After 1990 the formation of uniform market with its “four freedoms” of free movement of goods, services, people and capital is completed. In Bulgaria many different things produced in Europe and deficient in the past could be easily bought. Due to the foreign companies, which appeared in our country, the mass production and the export began to grow. A lot of new working places for the Bulgarians were created. Nowadays also millions of young people study abroad with the help of the European Union. After that they can freely choose their own career and where to settle down and make their livings.

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The European Union is one big family with its advanced communications and the relatively easy crossing of the boundaries without passport control.

We all have been listening to the stories of our parents and grandparents for the time before 1990. They queued for kilo bananas. Moreover, these fruits were available only in part of the big shops and only on holidays. Commerce was only with the socialistic countries and due to that the lack of goods was enormous. After 1990 new markets became accessible for us and intensive exchange of products began. This not only provided access for the Bulgarians to various goods, but also had a positive effect on our economy. Nowadays the export of traditional Bulgarian products such as wines, rose oil and yoghurt, which are highly valued all over the world, is easily performed. Bulgaria has access not only to the markets of Eastern Europe, but also to the markets of the countries in Western and Central Europe.

на Източна Европа, но също така и на пазарите в страните от Западна и Централна Европа.

Тя е по-известно, че преди 1990 г. всички масово производство е в ръцете на правителството. Всички продукти на селското стопанство и производството са били взети от държавата и това пречи на обикновените хора от лично развитие. Гражданите не бяха допуснати да започнат свой собствен бизнес, независимо от техните добри идеи. Те само трябваше да направят това, което правителството иска. След 1990 г. фабриките и компаниите стават частни. По този начин всеки човек може да работи за себе си и може да покаже личните му качества. Освен това, много чуждестранни компании са направили фабрики в България. Това носи много средства в хазната. Друго нещо е, че тези компании наемат само добре образовани млади и амбициозни хора. Благодарение на това в страната процъфтява не само икономически, но също така и в културно отношение.

Като едно голямо семейство всяка страна приветства чуждестранните студенти. Всяка година хиляди български ученици са записани в университети в Германия, Англия, Дания и много други. Те ще получат висшето образование там, а също и това ще помогне за развитието на цяла Европа с участието си в различни проекти и техните добри идеи, което прави този вид обмен на студенти от полза и за всички страни. С помощта на различни платформи като студенти "Еразъм" могат да посетят различни страни за кратък период от време. По този начин те могат да получат някои от чуждия опит и да използват някои от изучените методи в нашата страна.

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Със съгласието на Шенген туризмът става доста по-лесен, тъй като всички граждани на Съюза ще могат свободно да влизат в другите страни само с личните си карти. Все повече и повече българи напоследък използват тази опция. Те посещават много страни с богато културно наследство, като например Франция, Гърция и Италия. От финансова гледна точка, България също печели повече, тъй като страната вече е примамлива дестинация. Тя се посещава от много туристи в днешно време. Отделно от това, хората да създават нови приятелства и контакти с хора от цяла Европа, които могат лесно да се поддържат с помощта на най-модерни мобилни комуникации и интернет.

It is commonly known that before 1990 all the mass production was in the hands of the government. All the products of agriculture and manufacturing were taken from the state and it prevented the ordinary people from personal development. Citizens were not allowed to start their own business in spite of their good ideas. They only had to do what the government wanted. After 1990 the factories and companies became private. Thus every person can work for himself and can show his personal qualities. Moreover, numerous foreign companies have made factories in Bulgaria since then. It brings a lot of money in the Treasury. Another thing is that these companies hire only well - educated ambitious young people. Due to that the country prospers not only economically, but also culturally.

As one big family every country welcomes foreign students. Every year thousands of Bulgarian students are enrolled at universities in Germany, England, Denmark and many others. They gain advanced education there and also help for the development of whole Europe with their participation in different projects and their good ideas, making this kind of exchange of students beneficial for both sides. With the help of different platforms like “Erasmus” students can visit various countries for a short period of time. Thus they can gain some of the foreign experience and can use some of the learned methods in our country.

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With the Schengen Agreement tourism is rather easier as all the citizens of the Union can freely enter in the other countries only with their ID cards. More and more Bulgarians have recently used this commodity. They visit a lot of countries with rich cultural heritage such as France, Greece, and Italy. From financial point of view, Bulgaria also wins more as the country is now a tempting destination. It is visited by a lot of tourists nowadays. Apart from that, people create new friendships and contacts with people in whole Europe which can be easily kept with the help of the advanced mobile communications and the Internet.

After 1990 a lot of positive changes happened on the Old continent. They all build up the big family of Europe. The motto “United in diversity” is now a motto of every single person. And Bulgaria, our country is also on its road to a bright future.



Anelia Miteva

BULGARIA

Как разбираме Европа сега

Европа има остри икономически и политически трудности. Населението намалява и застарява, е в песимистично настроение. Идеалът за обединение на силите в рамките на Европейския съюз избледнява, тъй като тя се разглежда като неефективна в борбата с икономическата криза. Обединеното кралство, дори се колебае около членството си. Някои хора смятат, че Европа се превръща неуместен полуостров на Евразийския континент.

В продължение на десетилетия, ние, европейците, са свикнали да напредват: мир, демокрация, край на Изток-Запад разделение, подобряване на икономическото и социалното благоденствие, по-добри здравни стандарти, по-добра защита на правата на човека, равенството между мъжете и жените. След три поколения, ще е трудно да си представим, че това няма да продължи вечно.

Мога да се разграничат пет спешни точки на ЕС: Първата е икономическа и структурна: в днешния глобализиран свят, икономиките на повечето европейски страни са станали по-малко конкурентни. Вторият е криза в еврозоната, е добавянето на банковото дело, икономически и финансови проблеми към проблемите на тези страни от еврозоната, които не са адаптирани достатъчно бързо, за дисциплината на паричната зона. Третият е политическа: това е липсата на доверие на народите визави политическата им установяване. Четвъртият е намаляването на обществената подкрепа в Европейския съюз. И накрая, петият е тази, която се отразява на отношенията между ЕС и един от неговите най-важни членове, Обединеното кралство.

Структурната икономическа криза удря почти всички европейски страни. Най-много липсва конкурентоспособност. Глобализацията дава възможност на предприятията да произвеждат, където себестойността на продукцията е най-ниската. Много от така наречените развиващи се страни работят усилено и бързо развиващите си икономики. Техните индустрии не са специализирани в производства с ниска добавена стойност вече. Те са квалифицирана работна

Understanding Europe now

Europe has acute economic and political difficulties. Its population, decreasing and becoming older, is in a pessimistic mood. The ideal of joining forces within the European Union is fading away, as it is seen as inefficient in fighting the economic crisis. The United Kingdom is even hesitating about its membership. Some people think that Europe is becoming an irrelevant peninsula of the Eurasian continent.

For decades, we, Europeans, as one have been accustomed to progress: peace, democracy, end of East-West division, improvement in economic and social prosperity, improved health standards, better protection of human rights, equality between men and women. After three generations, it is difficult to imagine that this will not continue forever.

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I can distinguish five EU urgent points: The first is economic and structural: in today's globalized world, the economies of most European countries have become less competitive. The second is the eurozone crisis, is adding banking, economic and financial problems to the problems of those eurozone countries which have not adapted quickly enough to the discipline of a monetary zone. The third is political: it is the lack of trust of peoples vis-à-vis their political establishment. The fourth is the decrease of public support in the European Union. Finally, the fifth is the one which affects the relationship between the EU and one of its most important members, the United Kingdom.

The structural economic crisis strikes almost all European countries. Most lack competitiveness. Globalization allows enterprises to produce wherever the cost of production is the lowest. Many so called emerging countries are working hard and developing their economies quickly. Their industries are not specialized in low-value added productions anymore. They have skilled manpower, involved in high technology industries.

True, European workers have better social benefits and working conditions, but this increases the price of the goods they produce and the services they deliver, and this is only partly compensated by a higher produc-

ръка, която участва във високо технологичните индустрии.

Вярно е, че европейските работници имат по-добри социални придобивки и условията на труд, но това увеличава цената на стоките, които се произвеждат и услугите, които те предоставят, и това е само частично се компенсира от по-висока производителност. Съотношението между активните и неактивните хора в Европа се влошава. Скоро някои европейски страни ще липсват човешки ресурси, а те имат трудности при интегрирането на имигрантите, те се нуждаят. Освен това, европейските лица са склонни да бъдат по-предприемчиви и по-малко склонни да поемат рискове. В резултат на това, стандартът на живот и социалната защита са изложени на риск. Европа трябва да реагира и да се адаптира към света.

В очите на мнозина, тази структурна криза и кризата в еврозоната са едно събитие. Всъщност, те са различни и добавяне на един към друг. В страните с най-силно засегнати от еврозоната, въпреки тежката публичния дълг, икономиката е в рецесия, а безработицата е висока. Това води до социални и политически проблеми. Доверието в политическите органи е в състояние на свободно падане. Едно правителство след друг губи мнозинство. Extreme-надясно и екстремни ляв политически партии, както и популистки политици, получават значителни дялове от гласовете. Много гласоподаватели избират или да се въздържат или да гласуват за екстремистки или демагог популисти. Не вярвам класическите политически партии вече, избирателите не знаят какво да правят. Това е опасна ситуация.

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Самият Европейски Съюз, се счита или като отговорен и за двете икономически кризи или като не може да ги реши, губи подкрепа. Нейните институции са по-слаби. Човек се чуди какви ще бъдат резултатите от следващите избори за Европейски парламент през май 2014 г. Не само може спад на избирателната активност, тъй като той е направил постоянно, от 63% през 1979 г. до 43% през 2009 г. Това може да се отрази на състава на ЕП и имат влияние върху политиките на ЕС.

Резултатите от тези избори ще бъдат особено наблюдаваха в Обединеното кралство. Отношенията на Великобритания с ЕС винаги е било трудно. Това отчасти се обяснява с география, история и култура, се е влошило през последните години. Това е така, защото бри-

tivity. The ratio between active and inactive people in Europe is worsening. Soon, some European countries will lack human resources, while they have difficulties in integrating the immigrants they need. Besides, European individuals tend to be less entrepreneurial and less inclined to take risks. As a result, the standard of living and social protection are at risk. Europe must react and adapt to the world.

In the eyes of many, this structural crisis and the eurozone crisis are a single event. Actually, they are different and adding to each other. In the most affected eurozone countries, despite heavy public debt, the economy is in recession and unemployment is high. This results in social and political problems. Trust in political authorities is in free fall. One Government after another is losing its majority. Extreme-right and extreme-left political parties, as well as populist politicians, get significant shares of the votes. Many voters choose either to abstain, or to vote for extremist or demagogue populists. Not trusting classic political parties anymore, voters do not know what to do. This is a dangerous situation.

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The European Union itself, regarded either as responsible for both economic crises or as unable to solve them, is losing support. Its institutions are weaker. One wonders what will be the results of the next elections to the European Parliament in May 2014. Not only might the turnout decline, as it has done steadily, from 63% in 1979 to 43% in 2009. It might also affect the composition of the EP and have an impact on EU policies.

The results of these elections will be particularly watched in the United Kingdom. The relationship of the UK with the EU has always been difficult. This, partly explained by geography, history and culture, has deteriorated in last years. This is because the British think, with some reason, that the EU institutions have been marked by growing dysfunctionalities. The eurozone crisis is seen as a further demonstration of the EU's wrongdoings. It is also feared that it might entail a further integration of the eurozone, which would be seen as a potential danger to British interests. At the centre of all five crises is the bad state of the economy. Some think that everything could be cured with economic growth. I am not sure that this is enough. However, nothing will be possible without an improvement in the economic situation. On this subject, one has to stress that the EU's powers are limited. Each EU Member State is in charge of its own economy.

танците мислят, с някаква причина, че институциите на ЕС са били белязани от нарастващите *dysfunctionalities*. Кризата в еврозоната се разглежда като по-нататъшна демонстрация на закононарушенията на ЕС. Той е също така се опасява, че това може да доведе до по-нататъшна интеграция на еврозоната, което ще се разглежда като потенциална заплаха за британските интереси.

В центъра на всички пет кризи е лошото състояние на икономиката. Някои мислят, че всичко може да се излекува с икономическия растеж. Аз не съм сигурен, че това е достатъчно. Въпреки това, нищо няма да бъде възможно без подобрене на икономическата ситуация. По този въпрос, трябва да се подчертае, че правомощията на ЕС са ограничени. Всяка държава-членка на ЕС е отговорен за собствената си икономика.

Това се каза, в сравнение с повечето от своите конкуренти, членки на ЕС да имат силни козове: Високо продуктивна работна сила и високо образовани популации с добри условия на живот и благосъстоянието на добре защитени срещу болестта, бедността и престъпността, и се наслаждаваха на свободата и човешките права: Сложните индустрии и модерни технологии; Отлична инфраструктура и обществените услуги; Сравнително добро управление, по-високо и стабилно ниво на демокрация и средно най-малко, по-малко корупция.

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Правителствата на повечето страни от ЕС смятат, че заедно, с помощта на ЕС, те могат да направят икономиките си по-динамичен и запазване на начина на живот на техните народи. Но ЕС не изглежда в състояние да им помогне много. Той е бавен, за да се изправи срещу новите предизвикателства. Нейните институции не са достатъчно силни, за да наложат по-добро управление на правителствата и са зле адаптирани към броя и разнородността на държавите-членки: Вземане на решения в Съвета, е трудно, тъй като разминаващи се интереси са трудни за съвместяване; Комисията е по-слаба, както в ролята си на законодателна инициатива и като пазител на правилата; принципа да има по един комисар на държава, привеле през юни миналата година, е в резултат на по-малко независимост и по-малко ефективност и сила; Европейският парламент не донесе достатъчно добавена политическа легитимност; Избирателите не се чувстват те са в шофьорската седалка на ЕС при гласуването в изборите за Европейски парламент. ЕП също така се опитва да увеличи своите

This being said, as compared with most of their competitors, EU States do have strong trump cards: Highly productive workforce and highly educated populations with good living conditions and welfare well protected against disease, poverty and criminality, and enjoying freedom and human rights; Sophisticated industries and advanced technologies; Excellent infrastructure and public services; Relatively good governance, a high and stable level of democracy and, on average at least, less corruption.

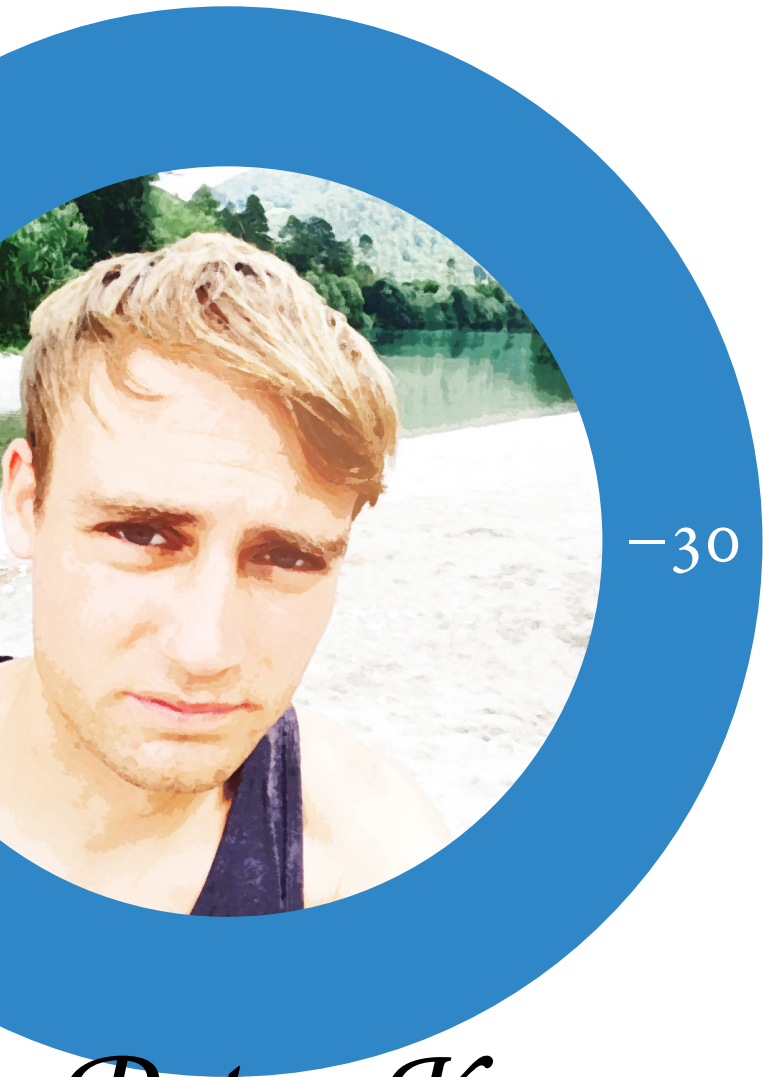
Governments of most EU countries think that together, with the help of the EU, they could make their economies more dynamic and preserve the way of life of their peoples. But the EU does not appear able to help them much. It has been slow to confront new challenges. Its institutions have not been strong enough to impose better governance on Governments and are ill-adapted to the number and heterogeneity of the Member States: Decision-making in the Council is difficult, as diverging interests are difficult to reconcile; Commission is weaker, both in its role to propose legislation and as a guardian of the rules; the principle of having one Commissioner per State, readopted last June, is resulting in less independence and less efficiency and strength; European Parliament does not bring enough added political legitimacy; voters do not feel they are in the EU's driving seat when voting in European elections. The EP is also trying to increase its powers as conferred upon it in the Treaties, weakening the Commission and modifying the decision-making process as foreseen in the Treaties.

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Member States are responsible as they established and shaped these institutions. Each time they had to make a difficult choice, they did not dare to adopt the appropriate means to fulfill the aims they were giving to the EU: First, they decided that a single market would be established among them but, as before the Single European Act they wanted all necessary decisions to be taken unanimously, it made it impossible in practice. Second, they decided to nearly double the number of Member States, from 15 to 27, for period (2004-2007), but they kept the institutions and the decision-making as they had been conceived for six more homogeneous countries. Third, they decided that, as about 85% of the EU budget is being spent in and by the Member States, fighting fraud related to the use of this money would be a priority. However, when the Commission asked for the legal means necessary to exercise control, they opposed that request.

правомошния, които са му предоставени с Договорите, отслабване на Комисията, както и промяна на процеса на вземане на решения, както е предвидено в Договорите.

Държавите-членки са отговорни, тъй като те създадена и оформена тези институции. Всеки път, когато трябваше да направи труден избор, те не се осмеляват да приемат подходящи средства, за да отговарят на целите, те даваха на ЕС: Първо, те решиха, че единният пазар ще бъде създадена между тях, но, както и преди Единния европейски акт те искаха всички необходими решения, за да бъде взето единодушно, то прави невъзможно на практика. Второ, те решиха да се удвои броят на държавите-членки, от 15 на 27, за периода години (2004-2007 г.), но те държат институциите и вземането на решения, тъй като те са били заченати в продължение на шест по-хомогенни държави. Трето, те решиха, че тъй като около 85% от бюджета на ЕС се изразходват в и от държавите-членки, борбата с измамите, свързани с използването на тези пари ще бъде приоритет. Въпреки това, когато Комисията поиска правната средствата, необходими за упражняване на контрол, те се противопостави на това искане.



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Peter Kumer

SLOVENIA

Erasmus – izmenjava dobrih praks in ambasada domovine

Praviš, da prihajaš iz Slov...aške?

»Slovenije,« sem jo popravil in se ji nasmehnil.

Verjetno ni presenetljivo, da imajo Neevropejci tako slabo predstavo o državah na starem kontinentu. To je razumljivo. Ni veliko Evropejcev, ki bi znali naštetih vseh petdeset zveznih držav v ZDA. A to, da obstajata dve državi s tako podobnim imenom, je bilo Američanki skoraj nepredstavljivo.

»Ampak državi sta skupaj in nekoč sta bili del Sovjetske zveze?« me je vprašala Sussane iz Pittsburga, medtem ko smo se peljali skozi osupljivo irsko pokrajino v grofiji Kerry.

»Ne, državi pravzaprav nista tako blizu. No, morda za ameriške razmere razdalja med Slovenijo in Slovaško ni tako velika, ampak nimamo skupne meje. Vmes je še ena država, Avstrija. In nobena od teh držav ni bila del Sovjetske zveze. Slovaška je sicer bila pod njenim vplivom, Slovenija pa je bila del Jugoslavije, ki ni bila v pretirano prijateljskih odnosih s Sovjeti.

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»Kateri jezik pa govorite?«

»Imamo svoj jezik. Slovenski.«

»Zanimivo? Ampak saj verjetno niste tako številni narod, pa imate kar svoj jezik. Kako to?«

»Res je, Slovencev je samo nekaj več kot dva milijona. Peščica. Ampak slovenščina je v vsakodnevni rabi. Je uradni jezik in se ga učimo v šoli, govorijo ga na televiziji, slišimo ga po radiu, ljudje ga uporabljajo med običajnimi pogovori. Opazi se vse večji vpliv angleščine, a nikakor ni tako kot z Irščino, ki je skoraj povsem izrinjena in jo slišimo samo še med obvestili v knjižnici ali na mestni železnici.«

»Pa je tvoja država tako turistična kot Irska?« V tistem trenutku po nasprotnem pasu zapelje avtobus poln starejših izletnikov.

»Mislim, da je lahko zelo zanimiva za obiskovalce. Resda sodi med manjše države, a je zelo raznolika. Na severu se je dotaknejo južni deli Alp, vzhod

Erasmus – the exchange of best practices and the embassy of homeland

“So you are coming from Slov...akia?”

“Slovenia, I corrected her and smiled back.”

It is not surprising that non-Europeans share such lack of knowledge about the countries of the Old continent. One can completely understand that. There is not many Europeans who can name all fifty federal states of America. But two countries with such a similar name – that is completely unimaginable to this American girl.

“But the countries have once been part of the Soviet Union?” asked Susane from Pittsburg while we drove through stunning landscape in the Irish county of Kerry.

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“No, the countries are actually not very close to each other. Well, maybe for America the distance between countries isn’t that big, but we don’t share our border with Slovakia. There is another country in between – Austria. None of these two countries was ever a part of the Soviet Union. Slovakia was influenced by the Soviets, but Slovenia was part of Yugoslavia which wasn’t in particularly good relations with the Soviets.”

“What language do you speak?”

“We have our own language. Slovenian.”

“Interesting. But you are such a small country. How come you have your own language?”

“True. It’s only a little more than 2 million of us. A handful of people. But Slovenian is used in everyday life. It is an official language which is taught in school, spoken on TV, heard on radio, people use it in their everyday conversation. The influence of English is getting bigger, but it is nowhere as near to the Irish language, which is almost entirely lost, so we only hear it during announcements in the library or while driving with LUAS (Dublin tram service).”

“Is your country as full of tourists as Ireland?” In that exact moment a

je ravninski, kot velik del Vzhodne Evrope, jugovzhod je gričevnat, preostali del pa kraški. To pomeni, da je v Sloveniji veliko jam s stalaktiti in podzemnimi rekami. Mislim, da je poznanih okoli 10.000 jam v Sloveniji. Zares ogromno število. Pa nekaj je tudi sredozemske obale na jugozahodu. Iz gorskega sveta do obale je samo dobro uro vožnje, iz glavnega mesta si v Benetkah v treh urah, nekaj več potrebuješ do Dunaja. Vse je res tako blizu. Pa ogromno je gozda. In pokrajina izgleda tako kot v Gospodarju prstanov.« Avtobus se je pričel počasi ustavljati na manjšem parkirišču nad pečino. Obala s klifi je bila tu zares fascinantna.

»Potem pa jo je res vredno obiskati. Slovaško,« mi je odgovorila Američanka in vstala, da bi z ostalimi zapustila avtobus. A preden sem jo lahko popravil, jo je val mednarodnih študentov že odnesel iz avtobusne kabine.

Sussane je bila ena izmed mnogih Američanov, ki so na University College Dublin opravljali svojo študijsko mobilnost, podobno kot jo Erasmus študenti iz Evrope. Povedala mi je, da je nad študijem in nad Irsko navdušena. Zelena pokrajina s prekrasnimi jezери in posejana z razvalinami srednjeveških gradov jo je naravnost prevzela. Da so gradovi predvsem za ameriško kulturo nekaj povsem eksotičnega, sem spoznal že na ogledu gradu v kraju Trim, ki ga je organiziralo mednarodno univerzitetno društvo. Čeprav je bila utrdba že povsem v razvalinah, so ti starodavni zidovi ameriški del študentov močno navdušili, še posebej pa dejstvo, da je bil tamkaj posnetih nekaj prizorov v filmu Pogumno srce, v katerem je igral Mel Gibson. Zanimivo kako veliko naredi pop kultura za promocijo nekega kraja.

Moja Erasmus zgodba se je pričela veliko pred izleti, ki smo jih, bodisi v lastni režiji bodisi v organizaciji Erasmus društva, opravljali študenti iz različnih držav sveta. Začela se je pravzaprav na januarski petek trinajstega. Ko sem še ravno pravi čas spoznal, da se nahajam na napačnem letališču in da do mojega leta v Dublin ni več veliko časa. Irška prestolnica je bila sprva vse prej kot prijazno mesto za nekoga, ki si mora v manj kot tednu dni poiskati sobo, opraviti z vso administracijo na univerzi in si urediti življenje za naslednjih pet mesecev. Ampak po nekaj razburljivih dneh se je ritem končno nekoliko umiril in posvetil sem se lahko stvarjem zaradi katerih sem se v prvi vrsti odločil za Erasmus izmenjavo na Irskem: študiju in spoznavanju novih ljudi. Študij se je predvsem nanašal na izdelavo diplomske naloge v povezavi z etničnim konfliktom na Severnem Irskem. No, pa vendar sem se udeležil še nekaterih predavanj. Toliko, da sem dobil občutek študiju geografije na Irskem. Družabni del je bil zgodba

group of elderly passengers comes from the other direction.

“I think it can be very interesting for visitors. Even though it belongs to small countries, it is very diverse. The Alps are on the north, the east of the country is just as flat as other parts of Eastern Europe, southeast is hilly, and the rest is covered in limestone landscape. Slovenia has numerous caves with stalactites and underground rivers. I think there are around 10.000 caves in Slovenia. There is also some of the Mediterranean coast in the southwest. To come from the mountains to the coast you need only an hour of driving, and from our capital, Venice is only 3 hours away, a bit further is Vienna. Everything is so close. And there is also a lot of forest. The landscape looks like in Lord of the Rings. The bus started to slow down and turned to the car park above the cliff. The cliff scene here is truly fascinating.

“Then it is worth visiting this country. Slovakia,” answered this girl from America and stood up to join the rest of the group exiting the bus. Before I could say anything back to her the wave of international students carried me out of the cabin.

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Sussane is one of many Americans who were studying at University College Dublin as part of their study abroad programme, similar to Erasmus for students in Europe. She had told me that she is amazed by her studies here and by Ireland. Green landscape with wonderful lakes dotted with medieval ruins absolutely touched her. The castles are truly exotic for American culture and that I realized while visiting the castle close to the place called Trim. The trip was organised by international student society. Although the fortress was in ruins, these ancient walls filled the Americans with enthusiasm. Especially the fact that it was chosen as a scene for the movie Braveheart starring Mel Gibson. Interesting what pop culture can do to promote a place.

My Erasmus story started a lot before these trips, which were organised by us or by the Erasmus society. It started in January on Friday the 13th. I was standing in the departure hall of Munich International Airport and realized just about the right time that I was at the wrong airport and that I didn't have much time left to catch the plane to Dublin. At first the Irish capital was everything but a welcoming city, especially for someone like me who needed to find a room, deal with the administration at the university and organise one's life for the next five months. But after a few exciting days the pace slowed down and I was able to concentrate on the very reason why I came to Ireland in the first place: to study and to meet

zase. Vsi tisti stereotipi o Erasmusu, ki sem jih slišal pred odhodom, so držali kot pribiti. Divje študentske zabave, ljubezenska razmerja, začetek novih tesnih prijateljskih vezi. Morda je visoka cena alkohola na Irskem vplivala na to, da smo se naučili spoštovati pivo, ga piti zgolj zaradi okusa in ceniti družabnost, ki se ustvari okoli te pijače.

Irška, dežela s tragično preteklostjo, se marsikomu vtisne v spomin, vsaj zaradi enega razloga. Izjemna gostoljubnost domačinov. Pa najsi gre za malenkost, kot je neznančeva roka, ki prijazno podrži vrata, da lahko oseba za njim bolj sproščeno vstopi v prostor. Ali pa navada zahvaliti se vozniku pri izstopu iz avtobusa. Prijaznost domačinov se zrcali tudi v dejstvu, da kljub neverjetno visoki motorizaciji ljudje še vedno ustavljajo avtostoparjem. Pravijo, da imajo slabo vest, če ne ustavijo in imajo proste sedeže in se peljejo v isto smer.

Po krajšem postanku na enem najbolj zahodnih predelov Evrope, rtu Garraun, in fotografiranju, smo se vrnili na avtobus in se odpeljali mimo gozdov tisovine in razmejenimi travniki na katerih so se pasle ovce. Moja študijska izmenjava se je bližala koncu in medtem ko je avtobus drvel po ozkih cestah na irskem podeželju sem razmišljal, za kaj vse bom bogatejši, ko se bom vrnil domov. Vsekakor gre denar, ki ga program Evropske unije namenja študentom na evropskih univerzah, ki se odločijo enega ali dva semestra preživeti na partnerski instituciji v tujini, za pravo stvar in to je izobrazba. Tako formalna kot neformalna.

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Z raziskovalnim delom v Belfastu, ki sem si ga zaradi slovesa kot poslednje krizno žarišče v Zahodni Evropi izbral kot temo za svojo diplomsko nalogo, sem lahko prišel do številnih zanimivih zaključkov. Ti ne bi bili dosegljivi, če bi se posvetil zgolj obdelavi gore literature, kar bi bila doma običajna študijska metoda. Tako pa sem lahko spregovoril z žrtvami severnoirskega konflikta, političnimi veljaki in predstavniki nevladnega sektorja, ki se trudijo spraviti sprte Irce in Britance in jim ponuditi prihodnost brez etničnega nasilja. Svojevrstna izkušnja je bilo tudi udeležba na predavanjih, ki potekajo zgolj v angleščini in doživeti drugačen način učenja snovi, ki temelji predvsem na sprotne delu. Učenje jezika v domovini angleščine pa je že samo po sebi predstavljalo svojevrsten izziv.

In tu je prišla na vrsto neformalna izobrazba, ki smo jo bili deležni mednarodni študenti na tem otoku, ki slovi po svoji smaragdni barvi. Spoznavanje domačinov, njihove kulture, zgodovine in obiskovanje naravnih čudes,

new people. The study was focused on my undergraduate thesis related to the ethnic conflict in the Northern Ireland. I attended a few classes. To get a feeling how the Irish study geography. The social part was a story to be told. All the stereotypes about Erasmus were true. Wild student parties, love affairs, new bonds of friendship. Because of the beer price we learned to respect the Irish beer and to drink it for its taste and appreciate the social aspect of it.

Ireland, a land of tragic history, stays into one's mind at least for one reason. The remarkable hospitality of the locals. It can be shown through the hand of the stranger who holds the doors for you to conveniently enter the place. Or the habit to thank the driver on your way out. The friendliness is also shown in the fact that despite the high motorisation rate people still pick up the hitchhikers. They say they have a bad conscious to drive the same way and have an empty seat.

• 80 After a short stop at one of Europe's most western parts, cape Garrun, and photo shootings, we came back to the bus and drove past the yew forests and the pastures full of sheep. My student exchange was coming to an end and while the bus was driving through Irish countryside I was thinking why will this experience make me richer. Definitely the money from EU programme for students from the European universities who decide to spend a semester or two abroad, goes for the right reason. It is called education. Formal and informal.

Belfast is proclaimed as one of the last crisis areas in Western Europe. I choose it as a subject for my undergraduate thesis, therefore I could come up to some interesting conclusions with my research. I wouldn't have achieved them, if all I would do is study piles of literature. As it would be the case had I stayed in my home country. In that way I was able to speak with the victims of the northern-Irish conflict, political players and representatives of the non-governmental sector who try to bring together Irish and British and offer them a future without ethnic violence. The classes in English were a unique experience, as well as the learning methods, so different from the ones in my home country. English learning in its homeland is another peculiar challenge.

Non formal education was an important part for the international students on this emerald island. Getting to know the locals, their culture, history, visiting the natural wonders, landscape created by glaciers or the streams

oblik ki so jih izdolbli velikanski ledeniki ali napravili potoki lave. Bivanje na Irskem pa je še najbolj prispevalo k moji samostojnosti. Življenje stran od mame, ki je za marsikaterega Slovenca tako nepredstavljivo, odkrivanje kuharskih potencialov in pranje lastnega perila, je obogatilo mojo osebnostno rast. Sprva sem si želel v tujino, da bi ubežal monotoniji vsakdana v Ljubljani in bremenu družbe, ki sem ji pripadal. A kmalu sem spoznal, da potovanje ne pomeni beg, pač pa iskanje ljudi. Znotraj univerzitetnega kampusa nihče ni bolj dovzeten za pogovor in preživljanje skupnih trenutkov, kot so mednarodni študenti. Najsibodi ob potepanju po Irski najsibodi ob skupinskem spremljanju nogometne lige prvakov. Medtem ko imajo domači študenti svoj ustaljen krog prijateljev in znancev, smo bili tujci tisti, ki smo vsak dan polnili telefonske imenike z novimi številkami.

Erasmus je izkušnja, ki ti spremeni življenje, je najpogosteje slišati od študentov, ki so bili njen del. Prvotna ideja programa, ki letos praznuje svojo petindvajseto obletnico obstoja, je bila omogočiti študentom pridobivanje študijskih izkušenj v tujini. Toda menim, da ne gre zgolj za prenos dobrih tujih praks na domače dvorišče, ampak tudi za promocijo svojega kraja v mednarodnem okolju. Hočeš nočeš, smo Erasmus študenti ambasadorji svoje domovine. Predstavili naj bi jo v dobri luči. Na žalost sem spoznal, da o Sloveniji kroži govorica o zaostali vzhodnoevropski državi z zanemarljivim političnim, ekonomskim in kulturnim vplivom. Prav zaradi dejstva, da ti stereotipi temeljijo na nepoznavanju naše dežele, njene večstoletne burne zgodovine in na neodkritosti ogromnega turističnega potenciala, je verjetno skorajda nujna naloga vsakega slovenskega študenta v tujini, da jo dobra zastopa. V času vzpona 'keltskega tigra' je Irska veliko vložila v promocijo svojih mest in naravnega okolja in tako v času konjunktуре njen turističen sektor beleži velik vzpon. Po tej poti bi morali stopati tudi Slovenci. Prepričati tujce, da Slovenija ni zgolj koridor do toplega Sredozemskega morja, prestolnica s trojnim mostom v središču ali kraj z idiličnim jezerskim otokom, ampak še mnogo več, je v današnjem svetu, ki se vse bolj očitno deli na razviti del in periferijo, nuja. In prav temu so namenjeni programi kot je Erasmus: izobrazbi o svetu in promociji domačega kraja.

of lava. Most of all living in Ireland contributed to my independence. Living away from mother, which is unimaginable for so many Slovenians, discovering cooking potentials and washing my own laundry enriched my personal growth. At first I wanted to go abroad to run away from everyday life in Ljubljana and the burden of society, which I belonged to. But soon I realized travelling is not running away, but seeking for people. Inside the campus, international students were the ones who were always willing to talk and to socialize. While trekking or while watching champions league. While my home students have their own circle of friends and acquaintances, the foreigners were the ones who were filling our contact list with a new phone number every day.

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Erasmus is an experience that changes your life. You hear it from students who were once part of it. The initial idea of the programme, which celebrates its 27th anniversary this year, was to give students an opportunity to get experiences from abroad. But I think it is not only about exchanging best practices to our home yards, but also about promotion of our hometown in international environment. Like it or not, Erasmus students are ambassadors of our homeland. Sadly I realized that Slovenia is known as a poor east European country with negligible political, economic and cultural influence. Since these stereotypes are often based on lack of knowledge about our country, its centuries long and turbulent history and its hidden tourist potential, it is important that every Slovenian who travels abroad represents it well. In times of the rise of the “Celtic tiger” Ireland put a lot into promotion of its cities and natural environment and so in times of conjuncture its tourist sector shows a rise. Slovenians should follow the same example. In a world that chooses to promote divisions between developed parts and the peripherys it is urgent that we manage to convince foreigners that Slovenia isn't just a corridor to the warm Mediterranean sea, a capital with triple bridge in its centre or a place with idyllic lake island. It is much more than that and people should realise that. In the end, this is what Erasmus is all about: education about the world and promotion of one's home country.



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Amalija Lazar Bevc

SLOVENIA

Nekega sončnega junijskega dne v osemdesetih letih 20. stoletja se mlado dekle, študentka, v modrih kavbojkah in poletni majici, s sivo torbo čez rame, bliža mejnemu prehodu na Erjavčevi.

Mejni prehod je namenjen pešcem, kar pomeni, da ne moreš čez mejo, v Italijo, z avtom, moraš peš. Ta mejni prehod je le za tiste državljane, ki imajo prepustnice, ne pa potne liste. Razlika med obema knjižicama ni le v barvi – ena kričeče rdeča, druga blede siva – pač pa v pravicah, ki jih pri-
našata lastniku. Z rdečim potnim listom jih imaš manj, s sivo prepustnico več. Na prepustnico lahko prineseš 'čez' brez carine določeno količino trgovskih izdelkov: na primer kilogram kave ali ene kavbojke ali predmete v vrednosti toliko in toliko dinarjev. Ki jih moraš seveda prenesti čez mejo, a to ni tako preprosto, saj na ono stran ne moreš nesti, kolikor dinarjev želiš. Vse je omejeno. Kaj je tudi prepovedano nositi čez, na primer 'devize' oziroma tuje denarne valute, lire, nemške marke.

Mladenka stopa po širokem pločniku mesta, ki ima v mestnem grbu rdečo vrtico. Kmalu bo prečkala železniško progo, ki teče vzdolž državne meje in pelje levo proti Šempetru, na desni strani pa ob progi stoji mogočna stavba, železniška postaja. Desno v daljavi se dviga najprej Sabotin, z belim napisom NAŠ TITO, nato Skalnica s cerkvijo na vrhu. Zrak diši po razgretem asfaltu, čeprav je še zgodnje dopoldne.

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Naključni opazovalec bi pričakoval, da dekletova mladostna zunanost ne skriva kakšnih posebnih skrbi, da se ji po glavi motajo razposajeno pole-
tne misli. Pod umirjenim videzom pa se kopičijo vprašanja brez odgovorov. Kakšen carinik bo na meji? Me bo kar spustil ali se bo zapletlo? Kaj me čaka? Pred njo je še nekaj pešcev, najbrž tudi on ubirajo isto pot, saj cesta naravnost pelje le čez mejo. Ali sem lire dobro skrila? Kaj naj rečem in kako naj se obnašam, če jih carinik najde? Še dobro, da tu ni sobe za osebni pregled.

Manjša stavba na levi in hiška na sredi ceste se neizogibno bližata. Kupiti si moram kakšne hlače po ugodni ceni. Mogoče bo dovolj tistih 20.000 lir, ki sem jih dobila od nonota. V Italiji so cene nižje, pa še kakšna razprodaja bo. Da le pridem brez težav na ono stran! Je že v vrsti pred okencem, za katerim sedi miličnik v modri uniformi. Ko vidi sive platinice, ji pomigne,

The border

One sunny June day in the 80s, a young girl, a student in blue jeans and a summer T-shirt, with a grey bag on her shoulders, approaches the border passing in Erjavčeva.

The border crossing is only for pedestrians, which means you cannot cross the border by car, you have to walk across. This border crossing is just for the citizens who have border passes (*lasciapassare* in Italian), not only passports. The difference between two booklets is not only in colors of the booklet – the first one is screamingly red and the other pale grey – but in the rights one obtains by owning it. You have fewer rights with the red passport and more with the grey border pass. You can “carry” more goods across the border with the border pass without any customs tariff: you can for example carry one kilogram of coffee or one pair of jeans or merchandise in the such and such amount of dinars. They still have to be “carried” across the border, which is not so simple, because you cannot carry as many dinars as you wish. Everything is limited. What is more: you cannot have foreign currency, like Italian liras or German marks, on you.

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This young girl walks along the wide pavement in the city with a red rose in its coat-of-arms. She will soon cross the railways, which goes along the country border, left to Šempeter. On the right hand side of the railways there is a mighty building, a railway station. On the right, in the distant background there is Sabotin Mountain with white hillside letters: NAŠ TITO (Our Tito), and then Skalnica Mountain with a church on its mountain top. The air is filled with the smell of heated asphalt even though it's only an early afternoon.

Random visitors would expect that the girl's youth looks do not hide any special worries and that her mind is full of joyful summer thoughts. However under the calm looks she asks herself questions without being answered. What kind of customs officer will I run into? Will he just let me pass or will there be any complications? What awaits me? There are only a few more passengers in front of her and they probably go the same way as her, because the straight road crosses only the border and it doesn't turn anywhere. Have I hidden the liras well? What should I say and how should I behave if the customs officer finds them? It's good that there is no room

naj gre naprej.

Zdaj je v vrsti pred carinikom v svetlo rjavi uniformi: manjši moški srednjih let, ki se ne trudi govoriti slovensko. Zdolgočaseno in počasi odpira prepustnice, sprašuje, če imajo kaj prijaviti, pregleduje ženske torbice. Še starejša gospa s kolesom je pred njo. Carinik jo očitno pozna, celo pošali se. Ali je njun smeh morda dobro znamenje?

Na vrsti je. Pokaže prepustnico. Koliko dinarjev ima? Izreče vnaprej pripravljen odgovor. Številka je sicer smešno nizka, a točno toliko, kot je dovoljeno na prepustnico. Pokaže naj denar. Iz torbice vzame modro denarnico in pokaže. Ni zadovoljen. Temne oči jo natančno ocenjujejo. Ali ima še kaj? Seveda zanika. Vzdrži njegov pogled. O bog, naj me izraz na obrazu ne izda, da kaj skrivam. Pokaže naj torbico in kar ima v njej. Tuje roke brskajo in pregledujejo. Ni prav veliko stvari. Med njimi je zdravstvena izkaznica, malo manjša knjižica od prepustnice, z rjavim, že malo obledelim ovitkom. Za notranjim zavihkom na obeh straneh ima spravljene listke (rumeni listek z naslovi knjig, ki si jih mora sposoditi v NUK-u; beli listki z naslovi knjig, ki si jih je že izposodila in jih hrani; nekaj listkov z naslovi in telefonskimi številkami; zeleni kartonček za zobozdravnika; študentska izkaznica s sliko; podobica s svetim angelom, ki varuje otroka na brvi čez potok). Debeli prsti okorno iščejo, hočejo izvleči vse tiste listke, a jih je preveč, zatlačeni so. Okrogli moški obraz kaže vedno večjo nejevoljo, jezo. Še trije beli listki iz mestne knjižnice, potem pa ... Sramota. Zasačil me bo kot najhujšo prestopnico. Kot kriminalca. Ki čez mejo tihotapi lire, ki jih v svoji domovini ne more zaslužiti, zamenja pa jih lahko le na črno. In še vsi ti ljudje v vrsti za mano! Groza. Črni brki nad polnimi ustnicami se tresejo od iht, ker se prsti ne morejo prebiti čez vse natlačene listke v rjavi zdravstveni izkaznici, nato poskušajo sneti rjavi ovitek. Dolgolasa študentka pa s skritim naporom vzdržuje videz ravnodušnosti. Nato se prsti ustavijo pred pretesnim ovitkom, s tleskom zaprejo knjižico. Nobenega skritega bankovca. S posmehljivim pogledom in glasno opazko o sramotni neurejenosti torbice rjava uniforma pokaže, da je pot v tujino prosta. Dekle z zardelimi lici prečka cesto in se ustavi še pri dveh italijanskih modrih uniformah, kjer še enkrat pokaže svoj dokument. Tu ni nobenih vprašanj. Še trije koraki in že je pred prvo trgovino. Ta je že na daleč drugačna od tistih, ki jih je pustila na 'svoji' strani. V njeni zdravstveni izkaznici se še skriva 20.000 lir, a jih bo kmalu zapravila.

Nekega sončnega poletnega dne leta 2010 hodi mamica srednjih let po

for personal check-ups.

A smaller building on the left in the middle of the road is closer every step she makes. She needs to buy a cheap pair of jeans. Maybe 20.000 liras I got from my nonno will be enough. In Italy the prices are lower and there will be some sales as well. If only I could cross over to the other side without any problems! She is already in line before the customs counter and there sits a militsiya man in a blue uniform. When he sees a grey booklet, he waves her to go forward.

Now she is in line before the customs officer in light brown uniform: a shorter middle-aged man, who does not try to speak Slovenian. Bored and slowly he opens the border passes, he asks if they have something to declare, he examines women's purses. Only an old lady on a bicycle is in line before her. The customs officer apparently knows her, he even makes a joke. Is their laughter a good omen?

It's her turn. She shows her border pass. How many dinars does she have? She utters a prepared answer. The number is ridiculously low, but it's precisely as much as she can carry on a border pass. She should show the money. She takes out a blue wallet and shows it to him. He is not pleased. Dark eyes scrutinize her. Does she have anything else? Naturally she denies. She endures his gaze. Oh, god, do not let the expression on my face betray what I hide. She should show the purse and what she has to hide inside. Strangers hands ransack and scrutinize. There are not so many things. There is a health card, smaller booklet than the border pass with a brown, faded jacket. Behind the inner side of the jacket there are small papers (a yellow paper with the book titles she has to borrow in the national library; white papers with the book titles she has borrowed and has at home; a student card with her picture; an icon with a holy angel, protecting a child, who's crossing the stream). His fat fingers clumsily go through her purse, wanting to pull out all those small papers, however there are too many of them, they are stuck. A round face of a man is ever more reluctant, even angry. Three more white little papers from library and then ...Shame! I will be caught as the worst delinquent. As a criminal. As someone who smuggles liras across the border, liras one cannot earn in our homeland and one can exchange them only on the black market. And all these people behind me! Terrifying. Black mustache above full lips shake with haste, because his fingers cannot get across all those stuffed little papers in the brown health card, then they try to put off the brown

Erjavčevi cesti s svojo hčerko, petošolko. Namenjeni sta iz centra mesta proti železniški postaji, proti nekdanjemu mejnemu prehodu. Dan je vroč. Stopata po širokem pločniku, približujeta se železniški progi, ki teče vzdolž državne meje in pelje levo proti Šempetru, na desni strani pa ob progi stoji mogočna stavba, železniška postaja. Desno v daljavi se dviga najprej Sabotin brez napisa, nato Sveta gora s cerkvijo na vrhu. Zrak diši po razgretem asfaltu, čeprav je še zgodnje dopoldne.

Prečkata železniško progo in nikjer ni miličnika v modri uniformi, nobena carinika v svetlo rjavi uniformi. Tudi italijanskih uniform ni. Nihče ne sprašuje po osebnih dokumentih ali prepustnicah. Nihče ne želi vedeti, koliko denarja imata v torbici, niti katere denarne valute hranita v denarnici. Mlajši ljudje, ki jih srečujeta, najbrž sploh ne vedo, kaj so dinarji, prepustnice, kakšni so cariniki.

Mama pripoveduje hčerki o nevidni, a trdni in skoraj nepropustni črti, ki je ločevala staro in novo mesto, dve državi. Hčerka se čudi in sprašuje. Mama pojasnjuje. In hkrati razmišlja o tem, kako bo znala svoji hčerki čez deset let pripovedovati o dogodkih iz sedemdesetih in osemdesetih let prejšnjega stoletja. Ali ji bo še znala povedati o vseh lepih, smešnih in žalostnih, včasih absurdnih in (za današnji čas) nepredstavljenih dogodkih in doživetjih iz svoje mladosti, ki so povezani z državno mejo? Ali se bo sploh še spomnila? Ali ji bo hčerka verjela?

jacket. The long-haired student struggles to appear indifferent. Then the fingers stop before the tight booklet jacket and they snap to close it. No hidden banknote. His look ridicules her and his words disgracefully say it out loud the young student's purse is a mess and then him in his brown uniform shows the way abroad is free. A girl with ruddy cheeks crosses the road and stops at two blue Italian uniforms to show her document again. There are no questions there. Three more steps and she stands in front of the first shop. This one looks so much different to the ones she left behind on "her side" of the border. There are 20.000 liras still hidden in her wallet but they will soon be spent.

One sunny summer day in 2010 a mum in her middle-ages walks with her daughter, fifth-grader, along the Erjavčeva road. They head from the centre towards the railway station, towards the border crossing . It's a hot day.

They walk along the wide pavement, they are approaching the railways, which go along the country border, left to Šempeter. On the right hand side of the railways there is a mighty building, a railway station. On the right, in the distant background there is Sabotin Mountain without any hillside letters, and then Sveta Gora (Saint Mountain) with a church on its mountain top. The air is filled with the smell of heated asphalt even though it's only an early afternoon.

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They cross the railways and there is no militsiya man in a blue uniform, no customs officer in light brown uniform. There are no Italian uniforms either. Nobody asks them to show the documents or border passes. Nobody wants to know how much money they have in their purses or which money currency they keep in their wallet. Younger people they meet probably don't even know what dinars are, what border passes are or what customs officers look like.

Mother tells her daughter about an invisible, yet solid and almost impassable line, which divided the old and the new city, two countries. Daughter is perplexed and asks questions. Mother explains. And at the same time thinks about how she would explain her daughter in ten years about the events in the seventies and the eighties of the previous century. Will she be able to tell her about all the beautiful, funny and sad, sometimes absurd (for nowadays) and unimaginable events and adventures of her youth, connected to the state border? Will she be able to remember? Will the daughter believe her?



—30

Andela Bojović

MONTENEGRO

Piši i upoznaj EU

Mali stan na trinaestom spratu moje zgrade, terasa... Dvije stolice i mali sto. Na polici "Gorski vijenac", na zidu gusle, a pored fotografije porodice i prijatelja i slike manastira Ostroga, mjesto nađe i sat...Možda me kucanje tog istog sata navede na još jednu neprospavanu noć. Iz dana u dan, čini mi se, postaje sve glasniji, kao da želi da kaže da nam vrijeme ističe. Vrijeme za šta? Pitam se...A onda mi pogled pade na kalendar i datum zaokružen sa tri boje, žutom, crvenom i plavom.

Uvijek me ovaj datum asocirao na čvrstu ogradu oko dvorišta moje zgrade. Ogradu čiji stubovi tu stoje već dugo godina i odvajaju naše dvorište od ostalih. Uh, nikada je nisam voljela.

Imamo mi zaista lijepo dvorište... Na malom prostoru smjestiše se Durmitor i Lovćen, Tara i Boka, procvjetaše crvene ruže, plodom nas darovaše vinogradi i utočište nađoše bijeli golubovi. Možda stanari moje zgrade žele da ograda stoji tu jer ljubomorno čuvaju sve ove dragocjenosti? Možda misle da ukoliko te ograde nestane, nestaće sve ono za šta su naši dedovi krv prolili...Možda bi "Suza Evrope" našla neko ljepše lice da na njemu ureže svoj trag.

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Pitam se da li neko od stanara, nekada u svitanje, sa terase gleda naš kvart, kao ja sad? Da li vidi razliku između našeg malog i još par sličnih i onog velikog dvorišta iza ugla? Onog dvorišta gdje se vremenom smjestilo 28 zgrada? Da li nekada kada prolazi pored ili kroz to dvorište vidi ljude različite nacionalnosti kako zajedno grade život unutar svog carstva? Da li vidi djecu različite vjere i boje kože kako zajedno prave kule od pijeska? Da li poželi da njegova djeca kroz koju godinu budu dio te igre?

Prije par dana mi u posjetu dođoše Ivo i Klara, djeca iz zgrade nadomak moje. Oni se od nedavno dio onog boljeg svijeta. Rekoše mi da se osjećaju bezbjednije i sigurnije nego ikada prije. Rekoše mi da se poštuju njihova vjera, kultura i način života. Da su sa ostalima postali "ujedinjeni u različitostima".

O da, želim da i moja djeca jednog dana budu dio te igre! Želim da žive život bez stereotipa i predrasuda. Želim da vole i čuvaju svoje a poštuju tuđe. Želim da moja zemlja ostane moja, a ipak dio tog boljeg svijeta. Da

Write and get to know EU

A tiny flat on the thirteenth floor of my building, a balcony... Two chairs and a little table. On the shelf “The Mountain Wreath”, gusle on the wall, next to it the photographs of family and friends, pictures of the Ostrog monastery, even a clock had found a place there... Maybe the ticking of that clock will make me spend another sleepless night. From one day to another, it seems, it is becoming ever louder, as if it wants to tell us that the time is running out. Time for what? I wonder... And then my eyes fall on the calendar and the date circled in three colours: yellow, red and blue. This date always brings to memory the sturdy fence around the courtyard of my building. The fence whose poles have been dug in many years ago, separating our courtyard from the neighbours. I never liked it much.

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It is lovely indeed, our yard... In such a small space, we have the towering Durmitor and Lovćen, Tara and Kotor Bay, a place where red roses bloom, where vineyards gift us with their fruit and where white doves find a refuge. Maybe the inhabitants of my building want the fence to be there because they want to jealously protect all these precious things? Maybe they think that if the fence disappears, all that for which our grandfathers gave their blood in battle will be lost... Maybe “Europe’s tear” would find another face to carve its trail upon it.

I wonder if anyone else among my neighbours, sometimes at dawn, watches our quarter the way I do today. Do they see the difference between our little yard, our tiny neighbours, and the big, spacious garden around the corner? The garden which now houses 28 buildings? Do they ever see, walking beside or around that garden, people of different nationalities building their lives together inside that kingdom? Do they see children of different faiths and colours together making the sand castles? Do they wish to see their own children take part in that game in a few years?

A few days ago I had a visit from Ivo and Klara, children from another building close to my own. Just recently, they had become part of that better world. They told me they are feeling safer and more secure than ever before. They said others there respect their faith, culture and the way of life. That they are now “united in diversity” with those others.

još stotinama godina nastavimo svoju tradiciju i čuvamo svoju kulturu. Da se u vazduhu osjeća miris zajedništva a vjetrovi prenose priču o velikoj zemlji koja voli i štiti svaku individu. Gdje se ideje lakše realizuju a snovi postaju stvarnost! O da, u mojoj Evropskoj Uniji.

Oh, yes, I want my children to be part of that game one day! I want them to live a life without stereotypes and prejudices. I want them to love and protect their own and respect others'. I want my country to stay mine, and yet part of that better world. To continue our tradition and preserve our culture for centuries to come. To feel the scent of diversity in the air, to have the winds carry the tale of a large country that loves and protects each of its individuals. Where new ideas become reality more easily and the dreams come true! Oh yes, in my European Union.



+30

Predrag Nikolić

MONTENEGRO

Pobjeda u ratu je bila gorkog ukusa, zbog onih koji su ubijeni i onoga što je uništeno. Spoznali smo koliko težine i bola možemo da podnesemo. Zato rađanje novog života predstavlja trenutak kada se sve boli transformišu u ljubav i nadu. Novi život se rađa sa ciljem koji treba ostvariti. Sve je zapisano u trenutku rođenja. I natalna karta i temperament i priroda svakog od nas. Kad se rodite nedostaje okvir za energiju koju nosite. To je ime koje vam daju.

Godinu dana nakon rata, istog dana, u dvijema porodicama na Cetnju, rođene su djevojčice. Dan je bio sunčan i miran. Povjetarac je unio nemir među cetinjske lipe i širio njihov miris po gradu koji je i dalje živio u grču godina rata. Roditi žensko dijete u Crnoj Gori tada, bilo je razočarenje u čekanju rođenja sina. Tako je bilo u obje porodice koje su tog dana dobile prinovu. Ali ne u istoj mjeri. Kod Popovića je bila jaka ženska linija, sa snažnim uticajem babe Marije, školovane u Đevojačkom institutu, zbog koje su u porodici govorili ruski i francuski kao maternji. Kod Martinovića se toga dana nije pucalo u čast rođenja djeteta. Otac je čekao sina, a majka je zaplakala kad su joj rekli da je rodila kćerku. Htio je sinu da da ime Janko, po svome đedu, ali kad se rodila kćerka – ime mu i nije bilo bitno. Majka joj je dala ime Višnja i darovala joj emociju koju će kroz život nositi. I sjaj u očima koji je i danas krasi. Željela je da njena kćerka ponese u ljubavi i sreći ono crvenilo višnje, koje je sa divljenjem gledala tokom djetinjstva, igrajući se u dvorištu porodične kuće. Popovići su kćerki dali ime Ksenija, po crnogorskoj princezi. Baba Marija, sinovima koji su bili komunisti, nije dozvolila da promijene svijet u kom je živjela. Sa svojom unukom Ksenijom, četvrtkom je pričala na francuskom, a ponedjeljkom na ruskom. Nedjeljom je vodila u crkvu.

Ksenija i Višnja, po vaspitanju i po uslovima života, nijesu bile slične. Ksenija je bila jedinica, a Višnja je imala tri brata. Višnja je sa svojim žarom u očima i dobrotom, i pored tri brata, kupila očevu milost koja joj rođenjem nije bila data. Majka je prema njoj uvijek imala distancu. Ksenija je bila jedna od rijetkih kćerki kojoj su roditelji dali krila. U školi su postale najbolje prijateljice. Martinovići su zazirali od tog druženja, bojeći se da će Višnja primiti previše „slobodnih“ uticaja u životu, jer Ksenijina porodica jeste bila poštovana, ali i drugačija po sistemu vrijednosti. To je izazivalo nekad osudu, nekad divljenje, ali uvijek poštovanje. Distanca prema njima

Višnja

The victory had a bitter taste, because of those who were killed and because of everything that was destroyed in the war. We found out how much suffering and pain we can take. This is why the birth of a new life is a moment when all pains are transformed into love and hope. A new life is being born, with a goal to strive for. Everything is written from birth. The natal charts and the temper and the nature of each one of us. When you are born all that is still missing is a framework for the energy you carry. That will be your name.

A year after the war, on the same day, two girls were born to two families in Cetinje. The day was sunny and quiet. The breeze ruffled the linden trees of Cetinje, scattering their smell through the city which still lived with the cramps of war years. To give birth to a daughter in Montenegro in these days was a disappointment, for everyone expected sons. The same was true of the two families who received the newborns on that day. But not equally. The Popović family had a strong female line, under the influence of grandmother Marija, who was educated in the Girls' Institute and because of whom the family spoke fluent Russian and French. In the Martinović family nobody fired a shot to celebrate the birth of a child. The father expected a son, the mother cried when she was told she gave birth to a daughter. He wanted to call his son Janko, after his grandfather, but when the girl came he didn't care what name she got. The mother called her Višnja (Cherry), and with that the emotions she will carry for the rest of her lives. And the sparkle in her eyes that is still there today. She wanted her daughter to have, in love and happiness, the red blush of a cherry she admired as a child, playing in the garden of her family house. The Popovići called their daughter Ksenija, after the Montenegrin princess. Grandmother Marija didn't let her communist sons change the world in which she lived. To her daughter Ksenija, she spoke French on Thursdays and Russian on Mondays. On Sundays, she took her to church.

Višnja and Ksenija had little in common in their upbringing and the way of life. Ksenija was a single child, Višnja had three brothers. Despite the brothers, however, Višnja's kindness and sparkly eyes bought the favour of her father she was not given at birth. But her mother was always distant towards her. Ksenija was one of the very few daughters whose parents

je bila lakši izbor. Između ispravnog i lakšeg, većina izabere ovo drugo. Tek sa vremenske distance se divi prvom, baš prepoznajući sebe kao tadašnju podršku, brišući greške koje je vrijeme pokazalo. Ksenija je bila gorda i direktna, a kod Višnje joj se sviđala vatrena želja za slobodom koji je izbijao iz svakog njenog pogleda. Majka se bojala tih njenih životnih iskri.

Beograd, kao grad u kom su studirale, je ispunjavao sve njihove želje. Ksenija je iznajmila stan, a Višnja je živjela kod nje. Ksenija je studirala medicinu, a Višnja književnost. Voljela je ruske klasike. Šolohov je bio njena inspiracija i čudila se Kseniji kako je moguće da neko bude opsjednut kostima i mišićima, zanemarujući dušu onoga ko ih nosi.

Dragan je bio student filozofije. Baš takvog je Višnja zamišljala kao čovjeka svog života. Vjerovala je intuiciji. Bila je na završnoj godini studija. A on je imao zelene oči i prelijep osmeh. Držao je govore na fakultetu tokom protesta 1968. Kseniji se Dragan nije sviđao. Za nju je bi previše sirov i jedan od onih muškaraca koji na ženu gledaju kao na vlasništvo. Prijateljstvo između Ksenije i Višnje je ubrzo postalo ćutnja. Ksenija joj je kurtoazno javila kada je nakon fakulteta posao našla u Luksemburgu, kao medicinska sestra do nostrifikacije diplome. Višnja je odlučila da se uda za Dragana. Tek što je završila književnost, ubrzo je počela da radi kao profesorica u Nikšiću, odakle je bio Dragan. Vjenčanje je bilo obično, samo što se Višnji učinilo drugačijim. Kseniju je mislila da zove za kumu, ali ona je u Luksemburgu. Višnja je znala da joj Ksenija želi najbolje, ali je vjerovala da za Dragana nije bila u pravu. Ubrzo je shvatila da Dragan ne voli kada ona ima svoje mišljenje. Šamar je bio putokaz budućeg ponašanja, nakon posjete prijatelja, gdje je po jednoj sasvim običnoj temi imala drugačije mišljenje.

Čula je da se Ksenija udala za stranca. Nije vjerovala u mješovite brakove. Držala se one: „Beri cvijeće iz svoje bašte“. Bila je srećna zbog nje iako je znala da Ksenija ne vjeruje u instituciju braka na način koji je normalan kod nas. Željela je da joj piše ali nije mogla. Bilo je teško reći istinu i priznati istinu. Možda se Dragan i promijenio. Nije lako biti muško u maloj sredini. Tu treba pokazati čija je zadnja. U malim sredinama se ne dešavaju velike stvari, pa se od malih prave bitne. Ali te sredine imaju i jedno bogastvo. Uvijek iznjedre nekog posebnog. Samo što taj posebni ode negdje drugo i za sredinu u kojoj je iznikao postane važan tek nakon što ga druge sredine prepoznaju kao takvog.

gave her wings. At school, they became best friends. Martinovićs were wary of this friendship, fearing that Višnja would pick up too many “free” ideas about life. Ksenija’s family was well respected, but their system of values was clearly different. This was sometimes a cause for disapproval, and sometimes for admiration, but it always commanded respect. It was easier to keep away from them. Between the right and the easy, the majority chooses the latter. Only after a while they learn to admire the former, remember themselves as the supporters of the right cause and try to forget decisions that turned out to be errors. Ksenija was proud and direct, and she liked Višnja’s fierce desire for freedom which transpired from her every glance. Her mother feared these sparks of life.

Belgrade, the city in which they studied, was everything they had ever hoped for. Ksenija rented a flat and Višnja lived with her. Ksenija studied medicine, Višnja literature. She loved the Russian classics. Sholokhov was her inspiration and she wonder how Ksenija could be so obsessed with the bones and muscles without much concern for the soul of their owner.

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Dragan was a philosophy student. Just the one Višnja always dreamed about as the man of her life. She trusted her intuition. She was in the last year her of studies. And he had green eyes and a dazzling smile. He gave speeches at the university during the protests of 1968. Ksenija didn’t like Dragan. She found him callow and thought he was one of those men who think of women as their property. The friendship between Ksenija and Višnja soon sank into silence. Ksenija politely informed her when after the graduation she found a job in Luxembourg, as a nurse until her diploma could be recognised. Višnja decided to marry Dragan. As soon as she got her degree in literature, she found a job as a teacher in Nikšić, Dragan’s hometown. The wedding wasn’t anything special, although it seemed special to Višnja. She wanted Ksenija to be her bridesmaid, but she was away in Luxembourg. Višnja knew that Ksenija wished her the very best, but she was wrong about Dragan. Or so she thought. She soon found out that Dragan doesn’t like it when she has an opinion of her own. Once, during a visit to some friends, he hit her when she dared to disagree with him on a completely mundane topic. It was an omen of his future behaviour.

She heard that Ksenija had married a foreigner. She didn’t believe in mixed marriages. She stuck to the old saying “pick the flowers from your own garden”. She was happy for her, although she knew that Ksenija doesn’t believe in the institution of marriage as it is commonly understood here.

Višnja nije mogla da se požali svojoj porodici. Znalo se da je žena uvijek kriva. Njena majka je često znala reći: „Ženu i mačku nikada ne možeš ubiti“. Uzrok za nasilje nad njom počela je tražiti u sebi.

Već prve godine braka počela je nositi tamne naočare. Krila je modrice od batina. Svi su znali i svi su ćutali. Odlazak u policiju bi se sveo na sugestiju o ličnom odnosu supružnika. Nisu je boljeli udarci. Boljele su je modrice koje je pokušavala da sakrije. Boljeli su je pogledi u kojima nije bilo podrške i sistem koji je tjerao da u sebi traži krivca.

Ksenija je u Luksemburgu radila kao psihijatar. Ponekad bi pomislila da bi Višnja bila srećna što je u medicini našla svog Šolohova. Pomagala je ženama iz Jugoslavije koje su tu imale problem sa sistemom vrijednosti koji ih je štitio, a koji je bio toliko drugačiji od onog na Balkanu. Iako profesionalac, nekako se vezala za Melihu, koja je sa suprugom i djecom par godina ranije došla iz Bosne. Suprug Hilmo je radio u gradskoj čistoći, a Meliha je bila medicinska sestra na odjeljenju za hematologiju. Svakog dana je gledala smrti u oči i pokušavala da održi nadu bolesnicima. Hilmo je bio tipični predstavnik muškarca sa Balkana. Ali je isto tako znao gdje živi. Nakon tri godine, prvi put su otišli na odmor u Bosnu. Već prvi dan po povratku Hilmo je izudarao Melihu. Nije ti ovo Luksemburg je bilo jedino što je rekao. Po povratku je otišla kod Ksenije. Prvih pola sata je samo plakala. Ksenija se odupirala osjećaju sreće što živi u braku gdje je voljena i poštovana i gdje se njeno mišljenje uvažava. Često je mislila na Višnju i njen sjaj u očima. Osmjehnula bi se svaki put. Voljela je kao sestru.

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Ksenija je svom suprugu željela da pokaže Crnu Goru. Radovala se jer je znala da će ostati bez daha kada mu pokaže Pavlovu stranu i Rijeku Crnojevića. To su bile uspomene koje je krila u srcu, vraćajući ih u noćima bez sna, kada je nostalgiji davala krila. Zeta su svi voljeli. Bilo mu je čudno što ga tjeraju da jede. Loza i vino su mu se baš sviđjeli. Par dana po dolasku, Ksenija je otišla kod Višnje. Pričale su dugo. Zašto to trpiš? – sve je što je Ksenija pitala. Ostala je bez odgovora. Kada se vratila, zagrlila je supruga i šapnula da ga voli.

Par godina kasnije, Višnjin muž je umro.

Ime joj je dato da bude voljena, jarko poput boje višnje u danima zrenja, ali tu energiju nije ispratila. Živjela je kako je mislila da mora, nemajući hrabrosti da živi kako želi. Otišla je kod Ksenije na par nedjelja. Divila se

She wanted to write, but she couldn't. It was too hard to admit the truth. Maybe Dragan will change. It wasn't easy to be a man in a small town. He had to show he was the boss. Big things don't happen in small towns, so the small things become big. The small places have a treasure of their own: they always give birth to someone very special. The problem is that such special persons always leave and their small towns only realise how important they were where they make a name for themselves somewhere else.

Višnja couldn't complain to her family. Everybody knows it's always the fault of the woman. Her mother used to say: "You can never kill a woman or a cat". She began to blame herself for the violence she suffered.

Already in the first year of her marriage she began to wear dark glasses. She was hiding the bruises. Everybody knew and everybody kept silent. Going to the police would come down to snide comments about the relationship between the husband and the wife. The blows didn't hurt. The effort to hide the bruises did. So did the looks without sympathy and a system which forced her to think of herself as the guilty one.

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Ksenija was working as a psychiatrist in Luxembourg. She sometimes thought Višnja would be happy to know that she had found her Sholokhov in medicine. She helped the women from Yugoslavia who couldn't cope with the system of values which protected them, but which was so different from what they knew in the Balkans. She was a professional, but she soon became close to Meliha who came from Bosnia a few years earlier with her husband and children. The husband, Hilmo, worked for the city cleaning company and Meliha was a nurse at the unit for haematology. She looked the death in the eyes every day and tried to keep the hope alive in her patients. Hilmo was a typical Balkan male, but he also knew the rules. After three years, they went to Bosnia for the first time after three years. The day after they arrived, he beat Meliha up. This is no Luxembourg, was all he told her. Back in Luxembourg, Meliha went to see Ksenija. For half an hour she only cried. Ksenija tried not to feel exhilarated with having a marriage in which she is loved and respected, and her opinions taken seriously. She often thought about Višnja and the sparkle in her eyes. She would smile every time. She loved her like a sister.

Ksenija wanted her husband to see Montenegro. She was happy, knowing he will be left breathless at the beauties of the Paul's sides and Crnojevići

i arhitekturi i čistoći ulica. Sa nevjericom je slušala pojašnjenja prilagođenosti sistema životu običnog čovjeka. Ali najjači utisak na nju je imao stepen samostalnosti i slobode jedne žene u Luksemburgu. Pokušala je sebe da zamisli da je rođena tu. Tada bi nakon prvog šamara rekla ne. I ne bi tražila krivca u sebi. Trebale su godine da u sebi oslobodi energiju koju je nosila. Naočare je sada koristila kao zaštitu od sunca. A oči? One i dalje sijaju istim žarom. Višnja je napunila 68 godina. Poput ploda drveta po kom je dobila ime, zrači ljubavlju i toplinom. Danas ima svoju NVO koja se bavi pravima žena.

River. These were the memories she kept deep in her heart, going back to them in her sleepless night when she gave way to nostalgia. Everybody liked the son in law. He was puzzled at their insistence to always eat more. He liked the wine and the brandy. A few days into her visit, Ksenija went to see Višnja. They talked for a long time. Why do you put up with it? – was all Ksenija asked. There was no answer. When she got home, she hugged her husband and whispered to him that she loved him.

A few years later, Višnja's husband died.

She was given a name to be loved, a name bright like the ripe cherries, but she let that energy to waste. She lived the way she thought she was supposed to live, lacking courage to live as she wanted. She went to visit Ksenija for a few weeks. She admired the architecture and the clean streets. She was incredulous at the explanations of how the system tries to adapt to the needs of ordinary people. But she was most impressed by the freedom and autonomy of women in Luxembourg. She tried to imagine what she would be like if she were born there. She would have walked away after the first blow. And she would have never blamed herself. It took years for her to free up the energy she always had inside her. Now she only wears the dark glasses against the sun. And the eyes? They still sparkle. Višnja recently turned 68. Like the fruit she was named after, she radiates love and warmth. Today she has an NGO which fights for the rights of women.

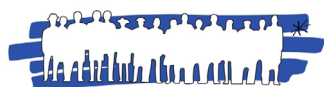


www.eurocircle.info
info.eurocircle@gmail.com

Founded in Berlin in 1993, Eurocircle has been a European NGO since 2006 that carries out transnational projects, notably in the fields of international mobility for youth, non-formal education and intercultural dialogue. The goal of these initiatives is to foster the emergence of an intercultural European citizenship based on the values of tolerance, equality, peace, solidarity and ecology. Our main objective is to facilitate the socio-professional integration and personal development of youth in particular with young people with fewer opportunities from the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (PACA) Region.

Eurocircle operates as an applicant or partner in different European projects and programs such as: Erasmus+ (EVS, youth exchange, Leonardo), EU for citizens, Europe Creative, Life, Prince, Progress, Social European fund, etc. Moreover, the Eurocircle team includes multiple trainers and we regularly develop training courses for youth and social workers.

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Centro d'iniziativa per l'Europa
* del Piemonte

www.ciepiemonte.it
segreteria@ciepiemonte.it

The Piedmont Centre of Initiative for Europe (C.I.E.) is a non-profit cultural organisation, based in Turin (Italy), working towards the building of a widespread and solid culture of Europe through information, training and cultural confrontation. It is an open structure, a network of citizens, associations, political and cultural organisations and local authorities willing to contribute to the debate concerning the new challenges of European integration.

Our main activities are: To carry out a permanent activity of informing citizens on European matters; to develop researches and publications; to organise educational and training workshops, conferences, conventions, meetings, exhibitions; to provide documentation, information and other services to individuals and associations; to ideate and develop complex EU projects. Our major fields of work are: European citizenship; immigration; citizenship rights; fight against discrimination and racism; international co-operation.

The folk high school is a different type of school for adult education within the popular education. The folk high school's main objective is to provide a curriculum based in General Education studies. That means you study all the way from elementary school through gymnasial levels. The folk high schools focus primarily on adults over the age of 18. Each school is free to choose its courses, without having strict centralised teaching plans.

The Vimmerby folk high school's principle is Landstinget, the county council. The school is situated centrally in Astrid Lindgren's Vimmerby in Småland. There you can choose amongst a large variety of exciting and rewarding courses and orientations, where you have the possibility to obtain competence for further studies at university. The school also offers two-year vocational education. Students can choose to live in school dormitories, which provide a social community and make the time at school a unique experience.

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www.ipcp.eu
info@ipcp.eu

International Platform for Citizen Participation (IPCP) is an International non- governmental organization working actively to foster human rights and local democracy. Founded in 2002 as a small initiative of the National Forum API, IPCP is today an important INGO connecting the local authorities and civil society. IPCP has members from more than 15 countries that share interests in theory, methods and practice of active citizenship. IPCP promotes discussion among local and regional authorities, schools, vocational centers, foundations and non-governmental organizations dealing with human rights, local democracy and active citizenship and with those in related fields.

The mission of Socialna akademija (Social Academy) is to contribute to active citizenship and social responsibility of young people and young adults through training, education, research and culture. It was founded in 2004 by 3 associations: one national youth organisation (Društvo mladinski ceh) and 2 smaller associations with the majority of adult membership. However, some activities under the name of Social Academy have been set up already in early 1990s.

Biggest strength of Social Academy is its capacity to develop didactical methods for youth work – especially those for training and education of youth leaders on the field of active citizenship. Several books were also published. Our trainers and authors are invited to many national and international projects and work for various stakeholders.

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Centar za građansko obrazovanje
Centre for Civic Education

www.cgo-cce.org
info@cgo-cce.org

Centre for Civic Education (CCE) is one of the leading Montenegrin non-governmental organisation with the vision of Montenegro as democratic society of responsible citizens. Its mission is to contribute to the development of civil society and participation of citizens in policy shaping and decision-making through the education of various actors in the field of democracy, human rights and European integration.

Objectives of the CCE are: Enhancement of citizens' education in the field of democracy, human rights and European integration of Montenegro; Encouragement of citizens to actively participate in decision-making process and building an open society based on the rule of law and equal opportunities for all; Increase of transparency, accountability and efficiency of institutions' work; Monitoring and promotion of anti-corruption policies; and other.

“This booklet has been developed by the partner of the ILEAC project Socialna Akademija (Social Academy), in collaboration with the project applicant Center of Initiative for Europe. All the stories included in the booklet have been collected through story contests organised in each of the six partners countries.

More info about the project can be found on the official website www.ileac.eu

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