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This special issue of Studia Europæa gathers the second group of the most relevant of the proceedings of the International Conference on “The New Frontiers of Europe, International, Inter-ethnic and Inter-confessional Relations in Central and Eastern Europe”, organized by the Faculty of European Studies (Babeş-Bolyai University) in Cluj (April 2006).

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THE FRONTIERS OF EUROPE

Andrei Marga

Abstract

It is indispensable and appropriate to distinguish between the geographical belonging to Europe: location between the Atlantic and the Urals, the traditional geographical limits of the continent; the historical belonging to Europe: participation in the movements that have resulted in the institutional and cultural forms of the continent, from the establishment of polis, through the contact with the Judeo-Christian tradition, the modern revolutions in knowledge, economy and law, to the defence of the fundamentals of the free society; the institutional belonging to Europe: the embodying of the organisations and legal framework of the open society; and the cultural belonging to Europe: cultivating a certain attitude in knowledge and in practical life, characterised by trust in factual analysis, fallibilisms and in the cultivation of the critical spirit.

HOW TO PREVENT ETHNIC CONFLICTS: THE UNLEARNED LESSONS OF HISTORY

Géza Jeszenszky

Abstract

We may argue whether the recent riots in the suburbs of Paris were ethnic or social based conflicts, but there is no question that the roots of the last wars in Europe, the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s (in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo), were national and religious differences. Or more properly: they were the results of old and new tensions between national groups living intermingled, in ethnically mixed areas. The on-going violence in Iraq and Afghanistan also goes back to such antagonisms. But the history of the last two hundred years shows not only numerous wars between nations, but also many successful efforts at reconciliation, and we know of many models for the harmonious co-existence of national/religious groups who live side-by-side or in close proximity. A study, an overview of the successful and unsuccessful arrangements may be useful for the prevention of future, ethnic-based tensions and conflicts.

TRAVEL AND IMAGES: HOW TO OVERCOME PREJUDICES IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS?

Enrique Banús

Abstract

*“Wer den Dichter will verstehn,
Muss in Dichters Lande gehn”
(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)*

Prejudices do exist. And they are a part of International (and furthermore of Inter-ethnic and Inter-Confessional) Relations. They can play an essential role. At least since the 18th century, writers, philosophers and also the common people were convinced that travel is a good way to overcome prejudices, to introduce dialogue instead of stereotypes. And that dialogue could contribute to the comprehension of “the other”. In the European Union, mainly programs related with the University and, more generally with the young people, are based on this philosophy: they have to travel (to exchange), in order to know “the other” in the real situation.

Is all this true? Is travel really contributing to the knowledge, to the establishment of relations which overcome prejudices, which open for alterity? Some examples from former centuries seem on the contrary to suggest that travel can confirm prejudices.

Under which conditions can travel be a positive element for transfrontier contacts?

THE IMPACT OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES ON DOMESTIC PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES– A RATIONALIST/CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH

George-Tudor Florea

Abstract

The current thesis attempts to illustrate the impact of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) on the domestic public administration’s practices in the Central and Eastern Europe region analyzed in direct relation with the states’ compliance with it. Furthermore, it provides an assessment of the FCNM document in both its theoretical implications as well as on its practice while evaluating its possibilities to reach effective norm empowerment at the states’ public administration level.

MULTICULTURAL ORGANIZATION OF EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

Gabriel Troc

Abstract

Beginning with an overview of the concept of multiculturalism, the article investigates further in details the ways in which some European universities involve this concept in their organizational structure. The aim of the article is to unravel the common patterns of this sort of organization for different universities, as well as the disparities, and to clarify to what kind of challenges these universities are trying to respond to by their multicultural organization.

ANOTHER DECADE, ANOTHER INCLUSION... (A FEW WORDS ON THE DECADE OF ROMA'S INCLUSION; A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE FROM RUMANIA)

Dan Oprescu Zenda

Abstract

(Almost) nothing new under the sun. From time to time, somebody is deciding to tackle "once and for all" the Roma issue(s). The recent initiative of the World Bank, Open Society Institute & quite a few governments from the Central and South-Eastern Europe (CSEE) might be considered just that.

Most of problems encountered by Roma of Rumania (and CSEE, for that matter) are very similar to the problems of the majority of the population, mainly due to the transitional difficulties (poverty, low education, subsistence farming, unemployment, unhealthy behaviour – including junk-food, smoking and alcohol – , crisis of traditional ways of life, domestic violence against women and children, corruption, inefficiency of public services, very low capacity to absorb foreign funds in order to alleviate/eliminate poverty – e.g.: PHARE, SAPARD, UNDP, USAID, Soros/OSI, numerous bilateral and international aid programs – etc.). Nevertheless, there are also some specific elements (mainly, related to widespread discrimination against Roma) which are making this transition (from communist dictatorship and from state-controlled economy to democracy and liberalism) even harsher than usual for people of Roma ethnic origin.

NORMAN MANEA AND THE NEW EUROPEAN FRONTIERS

Mihaela Mudure

Abstract

This paper focuses on Norman Manea, a contemporary Jewish-American who was born in Romania, in 1936, in a family of Jewish intellectuals. As a child, he was deported with his family between 1941-1945. In the 1980's Norman Manea immigrated to Western Europe, first, and then to the USA. Once in the US, Norman Manea had difficulties finding his own voice in the new language, in the new reality. Forever marked by his East European roots, he had to redraw his inner and outside frontiers in order to function in another existential universe.

*In his book, *The Return of the Hooligan*, Norman Manea describes one of his post-1990 voyages back to Romania, in Bucharest, Cluj, and Suceava. The voyage becomes a liminal space relevant for a self-mediating between several cultures and for the place of the Jewish intellectual at these new frontiers of Europe.*

ROMANIA THROUGH AMERICAN EYES A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

John Sorensen

Abstract

How do cultures communicate themselves to one another? Even more difficult to answer: how do they re-communicate or re-define themselves once an image has been set in the consciousness of another people? And, specifically, how might Romanian culture – which has, for so long, been ignored or misunderstood in the United States – be healthfully, productively re-defined and communicated to the people of America? Here are some thoughts from one who is engaged in that very effort.

INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY

Simona Branc

Abstract

This paper is based on the qualitative sociological research of the inter-ethnic relations in the Banat region during the 20th century. It will discuss the mechanisms that form the ethnic identity, the way in which this identity is negotiated during social interactions and the relationship between national, regional and ethnic identity.

The inter-ethnic relations have changed during the last century under the influence of the socio-political context. The analysis of the interviews taken with people belonging to different generations and ethnic groups emphasizes ethnic and regional prejudices and stereotypes. It also reveals patterns of the intercultural socialization and the role of various social institutions in the development of the inter-ethnic tolerance.

BEYOND THE GATES—ETHNICITY, CLASS, GENDER AND LOCAL IDENTITY IN A LIFE-STORY FROM BACIU

Zsuzsa Plainer

Abstract

Dominant discourses about “being a Hungarian in Romania” usually claims ethnicity to be a central, “overarching” category of minority identity. Hungarians usually appear in the public sphere as mere agents of nation-building processes, deeply involved in shaping their ethicized social places like Hungarian schools, Hungarian university, Hungarian NGOs in order to discern themselves from the Romanian society. Although in minority mass-media a special attention is given to political and ideological struggles about ethnicity or nation, these representations hide other types of socio-cultural differences like local identity, class or gender. By analyzing the life-story of a middle-aged Hungarian woman from Baciu, a quite large village near Cluj-Napoca, I’d like to go beyond these discourses. In doing so I let one member of the Hungarian minority group speak in her own voice, free to construct and narrate her life for the anthropologists who enter the gate of her house.