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European Studies – Different Developments at the Region Borders

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Abstract: *The aim of this article is to stress the systematic actions of development of European Studies from the west to the east of Europe in accordance with the European integration process. The process was a natural one, the majority of universities adopting European Studies programs in the previous years of their adhesion to the European Union. Jean Monnet Action was the European program which most stimulated the dissemination of European Studies and the development of specializations.*

Key words: *European Studies, development of specializations, European curricula, East Europe, West Europe*

European Studies, taught nowadays in most European Universities at undergraduate, masters or doctoral level, became a natural part of the curricula in higher education. They introduce European dimension in higher education and had contributed to the continuous European integration process of the European countries to the big family of the European Community and later on to the European Union¹. Analyzing various specialized studies in the broad and comprehensive field of European Studies, we can claim that these studies have appeared throughout the years in the European academic environment as a theoretical support within the large process of formation and definition of the European Union at all levels. Therefore, one by one, European countries included European Studies in their curricula around the period in which they joined the Union, and from then on the content of the European Studies has to be adapted to the changes that took place in Europe.

In this study we intend to illustrate how European Studies have developed at the border region of the European Union starting with EU 12 and ending with EU 27. European studies have influenced each other and have followed an enlargement from Western to Eastern Europe.

1. European Studies in EU 12

Regarding Belgian universities, yet before 1990 they proposed European study programs for the undergraduate. It's about degrees in European integration². Free University of Brussels offers the most comprehensive programs in the field of European Studies, taking into consideration the wide range of courses provided. European Studies program offered jointly by

¹ Julia González, Robert Wagenaar (coord.), *Reference Points for the Design and Delivery of Degrees Programmes in European Studies*, in "Tuning. European Studies for website". Publicaciones de la Universidad de Deusto, Spania, p.19. See: <http://tuning.unideusto.org/tuningeu/>

² H. van Houtte, P. de Ridder, *European studies program* in „Belgian Report for the Conference on European Community Studies” in „Place de l'intégration européenne dans les programmes universitaires. Rapports nationaux”, 1989, p.6

the Catholic University of Louvain and Liège University is oriented towards European Law. Besides this program, the Catholic University of Louvain offers also a European Studies program of general orientation since 1988.

In the five Danish universities, courses on European integration are taught as part of the political science, law or economics³. Teaching European integration and topics related to this issue as part of the political science takes place in different educational systems, even if these courses are taught by politicians of the moment. A general observation that can be done is that the subject of European integration in political science research and teaching was more prominent before Denmark entered the European Economic Community, before 1973, than in the next 10-15 years.

In its report, Greece proposes only a list of subjects to be taught about European integration in Greek universities. We can see that European integration is taught as part of the judicial sciences, political science, economic and business studies.

The French report concerning the development of European Studies is a very complex one. The first distinction of these studies is made according to the fundamental field which they are part of. Thereby, Community Law subjects have their origins in the reform of law degree from 1954 by creating a European organizations course. But the university autonomy imposed, in turns, either removing Community Law from the curricula, or introducing it in the curricula, as there is no constant. In France, exclusively or mainly community specializations emerged since 1974⁴ by creating DEA and DEES programs, which are programs belonging to the second cycle of study, i.e. Masters. Therefore, the following specializations emerge: DEA in International and European Law, Economic and Community Law, Single Market Law and DESS in European economy and European and international management. All of them have specialization in law and economics and in the end students are required to submit a dissertation or thesis in law or economics. Another initiative in this respect is to create certificates that do not fall within the constraints of national diplomas, but provide training focused on European Community matters. This is the case of the Certificate of European Studies issued by the University of Bordeaux I which groups all courses (institutions, law, and economics) from the Institute of European Studies in Strasbourg and the European Studies Centre from the University of Paris I⁵.

In the UK, European Studies have emerged as regional studies, as well as Latin American studies, Slavic studies and East European studies. As a field of application, European studies are considering contemporary Western Europe, its policies, its economy, its legal aspects and one or

³ Morgens N. Pedresen, *Teaching European integration* in „Danish Report for the Conference on European Community Studies”, in „Place de l'intégration européenne dans les programmes universitaires. Rapports nationaux”, 1989, p. 37

⁴ *Décret n°73-226 du 27 février 1973 relatif aux diplômes nationaux de l'enseignement supérieur et arrêté du 27 février 1973 relatif au diplôme d'études universitaires générales*. See The Official Journal of France: <http://archives.assemblee-nationale.fr/5/qst/5-qst-1973-07-07.pdf>

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 132

two foreign languages⁶. Since the emergence of European Studies program in the UK, it has benefited from a substantial growth. Thus, its fulminate grew in the 70s, thanks to a national incentive and went through a stagnation period in the 80s, although during this period study programs began to have their own identity and common goals. Moreover, since 1987, UACES organization arised, *The Standing Conference of Heads of European Studies* under the tutelage of Professor Christopher Bettinson and Kenneth Dyson, is the largest organization of this type, which is mainly focused on representation of European Studies in Government and research studies in this area.

The report notes that financial problems are the most important issue of the establishment and spread of European studies in Ireland. Administrative difficulties are not a problem because Irish institutions have a flexible attitude. However, the Irish encounter academic and political problems at the start of a European Studies program. Universities, but especially the professors here are traditionalists and wish to keep the purity of the subjects⁷.

The Italian report, like the Greece one, presents a list of subjects taught in Italian universities, disciplines which refer to European Community matters. This report provides concrete data such as: there are 76 European disciplines, out of which 41 are judicial, 12 economics, 8 history and 35 political. 35 disciplines have a 100% European content and 20 have a 90% European content. There is a total of 28 universities with European character out of 58 Italian universities⁸.

Right after the establishment of the European Community, various law departments of Dutch universities have introduced in their programs of study disciplines such as European Economic Law, Law of International Organizations and European Law. This phenomenon took place in the Netherlands in the 60's, when there was a significant increase in scientific education in the universities. A common feature to all programs of European Law in Dutch universities is that a general introduction to International Law is taught in the second and third year of study, as well as basic concepts of European Law⁹. Another aspect that deserves special attention is the fact that the University of Amsterdam is a pioneer in the introduction of courses on European integration which proposes a wide range of subjects related to European law. Professor Slot, who makes this analysis, indicates that interest in European law is huge from all perspectives, both from the standpoint of law companies and the governments, because trained people are needed in this field to enter the new labor market.

As a conclusion of these reports, it can be said that European Studies are a constant in European higher education and that they are taught in all universities. A constant that can be seen

⁶ Chris Bettinson, *European Community Studies and Studie son Europe in Higher Education in the UK*, in „Place de l'intégration européenne dans les programmes universitaires. Rapports nationaux”, 1989, p. 165-168

⁷ *Background Paper on Ireland for Liaison Comittee Sub-ommittee*, in „Place de l'intégration européenne dans les programmes universitaires. Rapports nationaux”, 1989, p. 229-234

⁸ *Enseignemets europeens: rapport sur l'Italie* in „Place de l'intégration européenne dans les programmes universitaires. Rapports nationaux”, 1989, p. 236-242

⁹ Paul Slot, State University of Leiden, *I.S.E.I.* in „Place de l'intégration européenne dans les programmes universitaires. Rapports nationaux”, 1989, p. 246

is that in each country, before its accession to the European Community, there is an increase of European Studies, an increasing regarding the number of classes, specialties and interest in this area, probably because of the wish of being informed about what is happening at the institutional, political and European economic level. A gradual decline of the interest can be noticed a few years after accession, the subject being no longer current. This is another testimony to the fact that European Studies are and will always be a changing process, according to changes of any kind that occur at a higher level in the European Community or the European Union.

2. Development of European Studies in Eastern Europe

Even though these studies had a relative dynamics until 1989, the real development was registered especially after 1995-1996, when European Studies were extended to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. A truly explosion is remarkable especially after 2000, when countries in the EU accession process massively entered the game, when witnessing diversification of the reflections on the European agenda and interrogations began to appear on the new university course. In this context of continuous development and the need to introduce the idea of Europe in university curricula, arises Jean Monnet Action in European higher education in 1990.

Jean Monnet program is a European Union action, which aims to foster excellence in higher education, research and reflection on European integration studies in higher education institutions around the world¹⁰.

To support the dissemination of European Studies in South-Eastern Europe, the Center for European Integration Studies from Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms University in Bonn, Germany, together with a number of partners in South-Eastern Europe has created a network linking major universities in this region of Europe which offer courses in European Studies. Thus, the Network of European Studies in South-Eastern Europe was inaugurated during a conference in Sofia on 28th – 29th January, 2000¹¹.

One of the main goals of the Network of European Studies in South-Eastern Europe was to create a curriculum that is perfectly adapted to the existing needs in the new European study programs in South-East Europe. Naturally, European Studies curriculum for this part of Europe must be built on the already existing experience of most universities in Western Europe. So we don't start from scratch, which is a promising start. However, the curriculum implemented in Western Europe was not taken literally, because there are specific regional peculiarities that must be reflected in curricula. For example, courses on the past and history of the region, the lack of

¹⁰ *Jean Monnet: Projets exemplaires. L'Union Européenne et le monde.* Luxembourg: Office des publications officielles des Communautés européennes, 2008, p. 3

¹¹ Rafael Biermann, Emil Mintchev, *A Core Curriculum for European Studies in South Eastern Europe* in "European Integration and South Eastern Europe", Center for European Integration Studies, Bonn, Germany, 2002, p. 5

democratic traditions and civil society, courses on stabilization and accession process of countries in Eastern Europe to the European Union, cooperation with NATO and the EU, are just some of the topics to be addressed in the framework of European Studies in South-Eastern Europe. In addition, it provides a link between Europe and the region.¹² Therefore, the main objective of this curriculum is continuous education of generations of students in Southeastern Europe, in order to gain knowledge not only about the European process, but also assimilation, internalization of European values during their studies.

The Network for European Studies in South Eastern Europe proposes the division of the curriculum into two basic categories: on the one hand, specialized studies, those existing in most universities in Europe, and on the other hand, specific South-Eastern European studies, meaning studies about the special problems existing in this part of Europe. It is recommended the use of both specialist staff from countries where European Studies programs are taught and staff of professors from other universities. In this way, exchanges between universities are being promoted at the level of professors as well¹³. Since the creation of this network, several conferences and workshops were conducted in the countries of South East Europe, in order to exchange experiences and ideas, and to promote these studies.

During the conference *European Studies Today* held in Romania, Cluj-Napoca, in 1997, Kapka Andreytcheva made a brief review of European studies in Bulgaria, which existed in 1997 at both undergraduate and Master's level. He notes that these studies still need time to fully implement in Bulgaria and that Bulgarian professors need training in this field and fruitful collaboration with colleagues from other European countries, although European studies are a priority in Bulgarian education¹⁴. The first Centre of European Studies in Sofia was founded in 1990, by a decision of the Council of Ministers of Bulgaria. It is an independent institution whose activity is organized under three poles: the provision of documents and information, instruction and teaching, research.

At the same conference held in Romania, Anna Wisniewski presented a paper on European Studies in Poland. From her study, we find that in 1997 in Poland already existed eight European Studies Centers which operated under the umbrella of higher education institutions in Poland. Two of them existed within the Academy of Economics and the other six within some universities. But there are specializations of European Studies also in some faculties such as Law, Political Science and Language. It refers also to the highest Polish institution of learning European Studies, which is the College of Europe in Natolin campus, Warsaw¹⁵. Professor Zbigniew B. Rudnicki from Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland, Institute of International Law, European Union and International Relations is carrying out a broad study

¹² *Ibidem*, p.5-6

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 9

¹⁴ Kapka Andreytcheva, *Teaching European Studies in Bulgaria: The TEMPUS Contribution*, în Dan Grigorescu & Nicolae Păun (eds), „European Studies Today”, EFES, Cluj-Napoca, 1998, p. 55

¹⁵ Anna Wiśniewska, *European Studies in Poland*, în Dan Grigorescu & Nicolae Păun (eds), „European Studies Today”, EFES, Cluj-Napoca, 1998, p. 28

on the state of European studies in Poland. He argues that European studies have been present in the study programs of Polish universities since the early 1990s. Due to the absence of official regulations in that period, the first European studies were focused on European integration¹⁶. But the real interest of Polish universities in European studies began to be visible once submitting the application to join the European Union. Around the year 2004, in Poland it can be seen an outline of a system of teaching and training for European integration, both at undergraduate, Master, and post-graduate studies. An important role in the development of European Studies in Poland was played by scientific and educational networks which have provided European documentation and materials¹⁷.

At a first sight we think European Studies in Romania have recently appeared, but they emerged in Romanian universities only after 2000. However, European Studies in Romania followed the path they had in other Eastern European countries, so that Romania fits in the European requirements in this regard. Since 1997 it is organized in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, an international conference with the theme of European Studies, which is a proof that it existed in the Romanian university landscape long before. A few years later, in Bucharest, in the framework of a project there is already attempting a first inventory of European Studies and European research that exists in Romania. Another important fact in labeling and fleshing European Studies as a specialization in Romania is the publication in 2003 of Claudiu Crăciun entitled *Nesting Europe. The State of European Studies and Research in Romania*. The purpose of this article is to initiate the formation of a real image on the European Studies and to provide information and insights that can help concerned Romanian institutions as well as school communities to direct their policy and efforts towards a faster institutionalization of this discipline and research area¹⁸.

Therefore, approximately the same trend can be seen in South- Eastern Europe as well as in Western Europe related to the introduction of European Studies in universities. Around the period of accession to the European Union, there is an intensification of these studies in the curricula. It is a natural tendency, given the need for training future specialists in the new fields that appear along with integration, not only at national but also at European level. We consider that there have been made efforts in the South-East of Europe too to implement an advanced education in European Studies and at present any university or program of European Studies in Eastern Europe is certainly comparable and satisfactory as one of the West of Europe.

¹⁶ Zbigniew B. Rudnicki, *The development of European Studies in Poland after 1989 – from specialization to institutionalization*, in “Jean Monnet Conference. 20 Years of Support for European Integration Studies: From the Jean Monnet Action to the Jean Monnet Programme”, Bruxelles, 2009, p.1

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p.6

¹⁸ Claudiu Crăciun, *Nesting Europe. The State of European Studies and Research in Romania*, See: <http://www.pedz.uni-mannheim.de/daten/edz-k/gde/03/Nesting%2520Europe%2520The%2520state%2520of%2520European%2520Romania.pdf>

3. Conclusions

European studies do not represent a center of interest only in the universities which can be found in the European Union. They are area studies, general studies, which may represent an interest also for other countries from outside the European Union. However, nowadays we can see a greater interest in European studies in non-EU countries, or in the ones which joined in recent years. In Western European countries the interest for European Studies seems to decline, this is normal, taking into consideration that there is a desire for a transition from an idealistic phase to one that explains the meaning of European Studies. In non-EU countries and even in Romania or in other countries which joined the EU in the recent waves, it would be necessary that those courses which contain European dimensions, i.e. European studies, to be at a more appropriate level for the students, to put more emphasize on the practical part, and offer a better understanding for the student about the ways in which following this kind of studies will benefit him/her. European Studies courses in universities from Western Europe tend to be more applied and adapted to the realities in order to be more useful and relevant for the students. Here there was a move from the explanatory phase, the implementation of the basic concepts, to the phase in which they put the knowledge into practice, in the experienced realities. We believe that this is the natural evolution of European Studies, and that in time they will be perceived at a different level and in different dimensions in all countries.

The analysis of the documents regarding the status of European Studies in most European countries, since their establishment as a subject and up to nowadays, leads us to realize that we can speak of three major evolutionary stages of European Studies in terms of their approach to curricula of study, namely: European Studies until 1990, European Studies between 1990-2000 and European Studies after 2000.

The period up to 1990 is characterized by attempts by universities, either to introduce European Studies curriculum or to popularize it among students. They are a totally new area; however they do enjoy recognition from the behalf of the students. Some countries already accord an importance to this area, but there are also countries in which universities deal less with this aspect. What we found in reports regarding the status of European integration courses in each country, is that near to accession to the Union, each of them have recognized an increase in teaching subjects with European final.

If until 1990, European universities could justify the lack of European study programs for financial reasons, it is no longer the case since 1990. That was the moment when the European wide program of Jean Monnet Action was initiated, through which, in turn, all universities may require the creation of departments, modules or even Jean Monnet Centers of Excellence, funded by the European Union. These departments, modules or dissemination centers provide courses on European issues. Until 2000, when the project was absolutely accessible to all universities in Europe, members or non-members of the European Union, the spread of "teaching about Europe" included a large number of specializations and faculty, the benefits were multiple. Therefore, the

period between 1990-2000 represents, through the Jean Monnet Action, the largest flowering period of European Studies.

Another European class project marks the beginning of the third stage in the evolutionary process of European Studies. It's about Tuning Project, also financed by the European Union which started in 2000. The singularity of this project is that for the first time, European Studies, together with some classical fields of study such as mathematics or chemistry, which is a special educational structure, is provided with own curriculum, assessment, teaching and learning methods or a list of mandatory knowledge acquired by the end the program. Therefore, European studies after 2000 are characterized by independence and academic recognition.

In addition to the three stages of evolution, it is important to note the fact that European Studies have developed in different ways at the European Union borders. They have gradually developed, as countries were integrated into the Union but also by the specificity of the areas. What was originally on the border with the other countries, in that the EU was geographically until that point, has come to be inside the Union and influence gradually the spread and development of this specialization which is common nowadays in all universities of Europe.

We believe that throughout the years and once gaining experience in the field of European Studies, the discipline will continue to grow and take other forms, perhaps more practical, both in the countries of Western and Eastern Europe.

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