

European studies: a view from Eastern Europe

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REVIEWS



EUROPEAN STUDIES: A VIEW FROM EASTERN EUROPE

***Introduction to European Studies: A New Approach to uniting Europe* / ed. by D. Milczarek, A. Adamczyk, K. Zajaczkowski; Centre for Europe, University of Warsaw. — Warsaw, 2013. 767 p.**

In 2013, the University of Warsaw Centre for Europe published a multi-authored monograph *Introduction to European Studies: A New Approach to uniting Europe* edited by Drs Dariusz Milczarek, Artur Adamczyk, and Kamil Zajaczkowski. This formidable volume of 750 pages is dedicated to the problem of European and EU studies. It is divided into seven parts containing 33 thematic chapters. 32 authors contributed to the book, most of them form the University of Warsaw Centre for Europe, which was established in the early 1990s. The other authors are researchers from the Institute of International Relations and the Faculty of Management of the University of Warsaw, Warsaw School of Economics, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Kozminski University in Warsaw, Lviv National University, and the University of Latvia.

As an academic discipline, European studies emerged in Western Europe and the USA in the mid-20th century. Its development was largely affected by the processes of Western European integration within the European communities. Two approaches to defining the subject of European studies have been formulated in Western Europe and the USA. A narrower interpretation suggests that European studies focus on the processes of European integration in the framework of the European Union and its institutions and policies. According to a broader interpretation, European studies address all political, economic, and sociocultural processes taking place on the European continent and forging its civilizational identity. Another key characteristic of European studies is its interdisciplinarity.

In the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltics, European studies started to develop only after 1989 with the launch of deep democratic and market transformations. Another important factor affecting the development of European studies in Eastern European countries and the Baltics was that they commenced preparation for the EU accession immediately after the fall of communist regimes. As a result, 2004 and 2007 saw the most substantial EU enlargement in the Union's history — seven CEE countries and the three Baltic States became full members of the European Union. To-

day, ten years later, it is of special interest to take a stock and analyse the vision peculiar to European studies in the new EU members and the features of its development in these states over the last two decades. The monograph under review provides excellent material for such analysis.

A large number of monographs on the European integration and the European Union have been published to date, mostly in the Western countries. As a rule, the structure of these works is based on the principle of functional analysis of the EU performance and the chronological consideration of the evolution of European integration. Many monographs address individual areas of the EU functioning or aspects of European integration. Moreover, there are works on theories of European integration.

The important feature of this monograph authored by Eastern European and Baltic researchers is its comprehensive approach to examining the phenomenon of European integration and European studies. It contains both a functional analysis of the EU, including a consideration of numerous aspects of European integration, and a chronological examination of its evolution. The monograph pays special attention to analysing a number of pressing issues faced by European integration (the Eurozone situation, EU energy policy, migration processes in the EU, etc.). The authors focus on different foreign initiatives of the European Union. Another distinctive feature of the monograph is the consideration of European integration in the context of historical and sociocultural evolution of the European continent. A large part of the monograph is dedicated to this aspect. In general, the work is well-structured by topics and problems concerned. Individual chapters written by different authors, on the one hand, constitute integral elements of the monograph's structure and, on the other hand, present original and accomplished research on the analysed issues. Readers will benefit from the comprehensive and thorough approach adopted by the authors in examining the problem of the European Union, European integration, and European studies, since it can help to acquire knowledge on the problem of the European integration and European studies and to develop the skills necessary for a critical analysis of the current issues of European integration processes.

The first part of the monograph is dedicated to the methodological aspects of European studies, the other six analyse different aspects of European integration processes, their history, the functioning of the EU institutions, EU policies, and relations between the EU and third countries.

When analysing the problem of European studies as a research area, the authors adhere to the traditions and approaches developed by the Western European and US schools of thought of European studies. The first chapter — “Theoretical aspects of European Studies” contributed by the director of the University of Warsaw's Centre for Europe D. Milczarek — distinguishes between two major areas of European studies: study of European integration and European studies proper, which analyses Europe as a civilization (p. 17). The second and third chapters focus on the interdisciplinarity and methods of European studies. In particular, the authors share the conventional perspective that the subject field of modern European studies lies in the realms of

political science, law, and economics, as well as sociology and, partially, history. Unfortunately, the theoretical and methodological aspects of European studies as a research area are considered only in the first three chapters of the monograph. The other chapters are more empirical and focus on the evolution and analysis of the current condition of European integration and the EU.

The second part of the tome is dedicated to the history of European integration. The first chapter here examines the evolution of ideas on European unity and European identity throughout the history of Europe. The second chapter analyses the history of European integration since 1945 and presents its fivefold periodisation. The first stage (1945—1947) covers the period between the end of World War II and the signing of the Treaty of Rome on establishing European communities; the second period embraces the consolidation of the Community institutions (1958—1969); the third period covers the 1970s and 1980s.; the fourth period (1992—2004) begins with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. According to the authors, the modern stage of European integration (since 2004) is associated with the most considerable enlargement of the EU to the countries of CEE and the Baltics as well as a crisis in adopting a Constitution for Europe.

The third part, comprising four chapters, analyses the legal system of the European Union and its institutions. Special attention is paid to the subject field of the EU law and the process of decision-making within the EU institutions.

The fourth part, consisting of five chapters, examines the economic aspects of European integration. It focuses on the problems of common internal market and free movement of goods, services, capital, and human resources. Part four also analyses the current condition of the economic and monetary union and the relevant issues of the efficiency of Eurozone management in the context of the current international and regional financial and economic situation.

The fifth part considers different EU policies. This part comprises seven chapters, in which the authors analyse the foreign trade, agricultural, energy, regional, migration, and information policies, as well as the EU initiatives in the field of tourism. A particular focus is the problem of transboundary cooperation in the Baltic region with the participation of the institutions and programmes of the EU, its member states, and regions.

The sixth part is the most voluminous. It is dedicated to the positioning of the European Union on the international arena and its relations with third countries. In particular, one chapter analyses the problem of evolution of the common foreign, security, and defence policy. Two other chapters consider the EU enlargement and development policy. As to the bilateral relations of the EU with third countries, the monograph analyses the EU-US relations, the EU policy towards its new Eastern neighbours with a focus on EU-Ukraine relations, the EU Foreign policy strategies for the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, Asia (including paragraphs on China and India),

Latin America, and sub-Saharan Africa. Unfortunately, this part does not contain a chapter on the EU-Russia relations. The inclusion of this material would be justified by the fact that Russia is the EU's third/fourth largest trade/economic partner and that Poland, Eastern Europe, and the Baltic region are important factors in the EU-Russia relations. However, it is worth noting that the problem of EU-Russia relation is addressed in a number of chapters (for instance, those on energy and foreign trade policies and foreign policy issues).

The final — seventh — part of the monograph analyses the processes of European integration from the sociocultural perspective. It is dedicated to the social dimension of European integration and its impact on European integration. It also considers the problem of European culture in the context of the historical evolution of Europe and European integration processes. One of the chapters is dedicated to the evolution of the EU cultural policy over the last two decades.

In general, the authors of the monograph managed to create a formidable work presenting comprehensive research on the EU functioning written in line with the theory and methodology of European studies and European integration studies, which have developed in the West over the recent decades. The monograph demonstrates the rapid development of European studies in the new EU member states. It is also worth stressing the wide range of problems under consideration, the depth of analysis, and well thought out distribution of material. Although the monograph does not contain a chapter dedicated to the EU policy towards the Baltic region, this problem is addressed in the context of 'domestic' policies, for example, the regional policy.

It is worth stressing the vivid interdisciplinarity of the monograph, which is proven by the composition of the team of authors, which brought together political scientists, experts in international relations, historians, lawyers, economics, sociologists, and cultural studies experts. Written in plain and clear language, the monograph of Eastern European and Baltic researchers can serve as a teaching aid for obtaining comprehensive knowledge and developing the skills of critical analysis in the field of European studies, European integration, and the European Union at universities.

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