

Polish conservative turn and perspectives on the EU

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The EU at crossroads

- **No clear answers about the future of the EU**
- **No clear answers about identity of the EU**
- **New divisions, new paradigms in the EU**

Liberalism

- Multidimensional crises (several crises)
- New divisions within the EU
- Internal political and economic challenges
- External challenges (new global (dis)order)
- New paradigms

Crises in the EU – since 2005

- Constitutional
- Economic
- Russian/annexation of Crimea
- Migration
- Leaderships
- Identity and axiological

these crises not yet finished

not adequately responded to these developments

New divisions and national impulse

- North–South axis (economic crisis)
- East–West axis (migration crisis)
- the centre, the periphery and the semi-periphery (division into Germany and the rest) and at the same time an urban–rural split between the capital, with other large cities, and the countryside
- ‘Our Own’ and ‘Others’ (e.g. Islam and Muslims are most often mentioned in this context).

- Due to the failed constitutional referendums in France and the Netherlands in spring 2005, - led to something that can be called the first national impulse, slowly undermining this essentially supranational project
- Deep economic and financial crisis brought about the second national impulse
- Migration crisis provided the third national impulse, so to call it, not only reinforcing nationalist trends and groups but also giving permission for openly xenophobic and often racist slogans

Completely new and unprecedented situation

- Variety of overlapping distinct crises, to which the previous 'from crisis to crisis' strategy can no longer be applied as they are too many and too serious
- As a result of these accumulated crises the European Union is now blamed not only for its own imperfections, naivety and sins but also for the collapse of the world of rich, well-fed and stable societies – the beneficiaries of the international order of the last 200 years (Western Europe), 100 years (Scandinavia) or 25 years (Central Europe)

Structure of international relations is changed

- Unipolar moment – IRAQ WAR in 1991; BALKANS WAR 1991-1995
- Multipolar WORLD (liberal order) 1993-2018...
- **2008 (economic crisis) - Era of American (WEST) (NEOLIBERALISM) domination to be over**
- **2014 (Russian aggression towards Ukraine) - military factor come back (hard power)**
- **2016 (Brexit) – UK – the biggest partner of US**
- **2016 (Trump) – America first**

- **The trilateralism order was truly global in nature (NEOLIBERALISM) three interlocking puzzles (the US, EU, China)**

WHAT IS NOW?

- *There is no doubt that Europe needs to reposition itself in a changed world – A. Merkel*
- *The old certainties of the post-war order no longer apply – A. Merkel*

- **The European Union faces an urgent question: how to position itself in the competition/ 3 options:**
- to continue to safeguard multilateralism, but the EU should not be naïve in remaining alone, among major economic blocs
- to become more reliant on the Transatlantic Alliance
- to move its centre of gravity towards China, or at least to remain neutral between the US and China.

NEW PARADIGMS of the EU

- FREEDOM -----→ SECURITY
- ONE EUROPE, COHESION -→ MULTISPEED EUROPE (INFORMAL NOW)
- TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS -→ EUROPE..?
- LIBERALISM - -----→

Europe today not the same Europe that we
have joined

Euroenthusiasm - Euroskeptic

- **Euroenthusiasm replaced by Euroskeptic forces, mostly of populist or nationalist nature**
- **Those accumulated crises brought about many new division lines within the EU**
- **The liberal mainstream is retreating, while ‘illiberal democracy’, however it is understood, or even authoritarian solutions, are starting to flourish**

- Support for the EU among the ten countries covered by the survey was recorded in Poland (72% of positive and 22% of negative opinions, while in Hungary it was 61% and 37%, respectively), while in Greece, or even France, an exactly opposite trend was recorded (with 27% and 38% positive and as much as 71% and 61% negative opinions, respectively)
- **it is untrue that the current problems stem from the fifth and subsequent EU enlargements**, in which much poorer post-communist countries of the former Eastern bloc were admitted to the EU
- The reasons for **the growing Euroskepticism and its sources are definitely much deeper and concern the entire continent**

- liberalism found itself in a deep crisis
- similar disappointment with liberal solutions also outside the EU (Donald Trump in the United States, Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines or Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Turkey)
- the key reason is the **domination of markets in our lives and the resulting unequal distribution of goods and excessive concentration of wealth in the hands of the existing elites**

Anti-liberal wave

- anti-liberal wave as well as an ideological 'counter-revolution' directed against liberal democracy
- populist politicians divide the society into the unblemished 'ordinary people' and the corrupt and self-indulgent elite (look for simple black and white patterns)
- The specifically understood 'familiarity' is contrasted with globalism, transnationality and supranationality pursued by the EU

- The Euroskepticism - national slogans and national sovereignty, which is being praised in all possible ways
- The new populist groups are building on the strong contrast to create a different, fresh division: into those who enjoy privileges and those who are deprived of them
- The UE as a child of the 'end of history' era (no longer any ideological alternative to the domination of the market and liberal democracy)

Conservative turn in Poland

- withdrawal from **social obligations** that the state has towards its citizens
- Not only proposed a new institutional, legal and constitutional model for country, but also based this **new model on a different set of values** than the previous one
- the **state replaces free market**, the economy and governance are being **centralised** or even nationalised, **elites are changed**

- the **concept of 'nation'** replaces an idea of supranationality in the hierarchy of values
- return to tradition, recent **history is being redefined**, there is a search for new points of reference and **new heroes**, and **state authority is associated with faith and the Church**
- **Family, children and social support for the poor are at the centre** of interest of the state authorities.

- more **accusation against the elites** that have ruled since the system change of 1989/90,
- in practice is yet another dimension of the accumulated **split between the elites and the nation**
- serious charges is **the overly technocratic approach of Brussels** and European institutions to the ongoing processes and developments, without proper social sensitivity and empathy for vulnerable social groups or classes