

# TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE: LIBERALIZATION, INTEGRAL CULTURAL SPACE AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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*The paper aims to evaluate the main features of the creation and development of an integral cultural and economic space in Europe, the main problems of economic and social development and provision of equal rights in the context of the transition processes in Central and Eastern Europe.*

*Transformation processes in Central and Eastern Europe are described. The new challenges for economic development and social-oriented changes are analysed.*

*In the paper, results of a research done over the recent several years into the diagnostics of the problems of transformations as well as economic and social development in Central and Eastern Europe are used, with a focus on the development of the integral space and human rights.*

*The major findings show that the creation and development of an integral space in Europe is a very complex and controversial process implying various problems and conflicts. Therefore, to encourage the creation of an integral space in Europe, appropriate cultural policies should be implemented. These policies may embrace many priorities including*

- *the preservation of cultural diversity;*
- *adaptation and dissemination of integrated European dimensions;*
- *elimination of factors incompatible with humanism and democracy in all European countries;*
- *provision of equal rights to all groups of society.*

*For implementing the key priorities of cultural policies, a number of pan-European special programmes are suggested.*

*New non-traditional ideas regarding the possible economic and social development of Central and Eastern Europe are discussed.*

**Keywords:** *transition, integral space, Central and Eastern Europe, equal rights*

## Introduction

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is the age of increasingly developing transformations in the whole world and all spheres of life. Transformations embody the most important attributes

of the modern époque; therefore, all relevant political, social, economic, technological, ecological and other issues should be conceived and approached as issues of transformations. In the processes of trans-

formation and globalization, society of a new type is being formed, with its typical new values and strivings which create different patterns of lifestyle and are confronted with new problems and searches for their solution.

Globalization processes are very prominent in modern Europe. The key feature of globalization in Europe is the fact that an integral European society is being born, which builds an integral cultural space as well as integral spaces for social, economic, political, technological, ecological and information development.

Creation of an integral cultural space in Europe makes not only preconditions for basic changes in the living environment of all European nations, but also shows that a new quality is being shaped both of society itself and of each European citizen. On the one hand, the development of integral cultural space opens a number of new opportunities and perspectives for social advancement in the whole Europe; on the other hand, this process inevitably causes new problems and conflicts, and their solution requires an adequate policy in the sphere of culture.

The formation of an integral cultural space in Europe is a complicated process. One of the main problems to be solved is associated with the so-called *equal rights*, implying that equal rights should be provided to all social groups, strata and communities in social, economic, political and other areas all over the country, in any region, as well as in public and business sectors.

The awareness of the significance of this problem in society is important for developing new approaches to creating an

integral cultural space in Europe and identification of the priorities in achieving it.

The creation of the integral cultural space and the assurance of equal rights in Europe is a significant problem of research. The goal of such research may be defined as updating society by means of cultural policy aimed at ensuring equal rights to the inhabitants of all European states.

The research into this problem should be closely related to the analysis of the transformations that took place in Europe because such analysis could allow identification of changes in the area of equal rights. The relationships among the above processes which took place over the last 15–20 years can be clearly seen in Central and Eastern Europe. This allows us to state that the problem of creating an integral cultural space in Europe should be considered with regard to general conditions and specific features of transformations that took place in this period.

The paper presents results obtained by the author, which indicate the emergence of new trends and challenges in the area of creating an integral cultural space in Europe and ensuring equal rights to all members of society.

### **Economic development and the integral cultural space in Europe: the new challenges, priorities and problems**

Comprehending the concept of integral culture is essential for business practitioners, especially among those who seek to keep it culturally relevant, while increasing sales of products and services (Harris, 2004). In general, culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit of and for behaviour

acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other hand as conditioning elements of future action (Cameron, Quinn, 1999; Katsioloude, 2002). Culture is something that is shared by almost all members of some social group, that the older members of the group try to pass on to the younger members and something (as in the case of morals, laws and customs) that shapes behaviour (Fraerman et al., 1996; Hofstede, 2000).

The growth of an integral cultural space in Europe is being influenced by a great number of diverse factors, Among these factors as very important appear those related to the expansion of the European Union and to transformation processes in Eastern and Central Europe, meaning that the integration of Eastern and Central European countries into the European Union indicates not only the quantitative growth of the European Union (increase in the number of member states, their population, overall territories and economic potential), but also a qualitative transformation of the entire Europe. By the way, this particular consideration that integration of the Eastern and Central European countries is directly influencing quantitative changes in the entire Europe demonstrates the significance of the factors mentioned above for the formation of an integral cultural space in Europe.

The development of an integral cultural space in Europe, taking into account the

situation of the integration of the Eastern and Central European countries into the European Union, is a very complex and conflicting process. On the one hand, this process opens a number of new opportunities and perspectives for societal advancement in all Europe, including the countries of Eastern and Central Europe. On the other hand, this process inevitably involves new problems and new conflicts, and their solutions require an adequate policy, including the sphere of culture. This means that identification of the new challenges for cultural policies and the understanding of the essence of these challenges, as well as the capability to treat them properly are the high priority tasks in the situation of the growth of the European Union (Melnikas, 2002).

The importance of the above tasks suggests that theoretical and practical studies designed to better conceive and solve them can be considered as relevant both in scientific and practical sense.

The development of an integral cultural space is a striking sign of the contemporary society in Europe, which allows making a complex definition of the development of political, social, economic and technological processes. The integral cultural space in Europe can be perceived as a portmanteau. The easiest way is to see the integral cultural space in Europe as a general system of priority values, stereotypes of social behaviour, lifestyle patterns and moral and spiritual standards typical of all layers of the European countries.

Such definition of the integral cultural space demonstrates a very important factor: the integrity of the cultural space can be understood as an affinity of priority

values, stereotypes of social behaviour, lifestyle patterns and moral and spiritual standards to all societal layers in all European countries. Thus, it is possible to state that the level of the affinity can determine the integrity of the whole cultural space. The more likeness can be seen within the systems of values, behaviour, lifestyle patterns and standards of different countries and societal layers, the more integral can be their common cultural space, and vice versa: if the systems of values, behaviour, lifestyle patterns and standards of different countries and societal layers do not suggest the idea of common features or suggest great differences, one may say that the society of these countries does not share an integral cultural space.

When giving comments on the concept of an integral cultural space, it is necessary to accentuate several conditions. First, this definition suggests that one might acknowledge the existence of different system values, stereotypes of social behaviour, lifestyle patterns and moral and spiritual standards, typical of different countries and societal layers. Similarity or affinity of different systems can be comprehended as an assumption for associating different cultural spaces into integral cultural spaces. Next, this definition demonstrates the idea that an integral cultural space conveys the situation where all key elements of cultural spaces of different countries and societal layers merge; this means that the main precondition for the formation of an integral cultural space is a high level of its internal integrity. Then, this definition implies that the integral cultural space creates a situation where specific features of particular countries or societal layers may

gradually lose their influence on the further growth of these cultures: the critical role of each country and societal development falls on the processes that start interfering as the general processes of the integral cultural space.

During the development of the integral European cultural space, in the situation of European integration and the growth of the European Union, a great number of various problems related to this development emerge. These problems are very diverse, and they demonstrate a very diverse scale of reasons causing them and a diverse level of their importance; however, it is necessary to consider them when aiming at a consecutive development of the processes of the actual integration into Europe.

Among the main problems arising in the development of the integral cultural space, the following can be identified:

1. An immense cultural differentiation among countries, regions and social layers: the differentiation of this kind is influenced by too serious differences within their economic development and social status (there are too serious differences among different countries, different regions, and different social, professional, as well as ethnic or confessional groups or layers, both within particular countries or regions and in Europe or even the world).
2. Various ethnic, confessional or social conflicts that existed in history and are still present in some inexplicit ways, and the relics of these conflicts; there are many cases in modern Europe when various historically developed conflicts and their relics interfere with the development of the integral cultural space.

3. A disproportion in the momentum of technological, economic and social, as well as cultural development: technological progress and the growth of economic well-being are very often faster than social, cultural and mental changes, disproportion of this character determines the fact that in some societal layers or even countries a certain inadequacy of the cultural and spiritual development to economic well-being and technological opportunities can be observed: this inadequacy provokes a decline of moral norms, deprivation of social accountability and causes other negative consequences.
4. The too deep cultural insularity seen in particular countries and resulting in the lack of tolerance to other cultures, individual and group egotism, as well as insufficient capabilities to adapt to the intense social and cultural changes; cultural insularity and the lack of tolerance to other cultures not only affects the development of the integral cultural space, but also provokes social, economic and other sorts of conflicts.
5. In many spheres of societal development, there is a lack of administrative capabilities necessary for partnership development and intercultural and multicultural exchange: the policies in culture are often declaratory and inappropriately oriented towards the basic needs of society, coming forth in the situation of the European integration and the development of the European Union.

It is critical to regard the problems and conflicts that we have discussed here and other problems and conflicts arising or de-

veloping in the construction of the integral European cultural space when working on crucial issues of cultural policies related to the further European integration and the development of the European Union.

The understanding of the problems mentioned above allows us to apply the aforementioned concepts of the integral cultural space in cases when various problems related the European integration and the expansion of the European Union arise.

### **Transformations in Central and Eastern Europe: the main typicalities and the context of European integration**

Modern science understands transformations generally as changes testifying a certain object or system to have acquired a new shape or a new state. This approach is rather universal and can find a great deal of evidence in many scientific studies (Porter, 1980; Dicken, 1998; Altvater, Mahnkopf, 1996; Currie, 2000; Hunt, 2000; Perraton, 2001; Boldrin, Canova, 2001; Rosenzweig, 2001; Garret, Mitchell, 2001; Ghose, 2004).

Incidentally, this concept is akin to the studies examining economic transformations, especially those showing transition from the close plan economy towards the open and liberal market economy (Lavingne, 1995; Melnikas, 1999, 2002; Hayo, Seifert, 2003; Hofbauer, 2003).

Transformations in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as processes of the development of the European Union have been analysed to a very comprehensive extent. A very broad panorama of changes in the entire, especially in Central and Eastern,

Europe has been given in scientific publications dedicated to the transformations (Lavingne, 1995; Hofbauer, 2003; Hayo, Seifert, 2003). It is also worth mentioning that in the majority of scientific writings on transformations in Central and Eastern Europe a certain one-sided emphasis can be observed. Unfortunately, transformations in Central and Eastern Europe are frequently perceived as an exclusive transfer of Western expertise (especially, the expertise of Western Europe) to Central and Eastern Europe: in these cases transformations are understood as promotion and implementation of the Western lifestyles in the East and a plain adaptation of these standards, applying the local specificity of the Central and Eastern European countries. Importantly, in many cases the following factor is ignored: transformations in Central and Eastern Europe and the development of the European Union make a great influence on the entire European Union and is a crucial factor for changes both in Western Europe and in the whole world (Melnikas, 2002; Melnikas, Reichelt, 2004).

Transformations in Central and Eastern Europe should be perceived part of a complex process, involving transformations in the entire Europe and the entire world. The main elements of this complex process are the following:

- transformations, marking the “exit” of the Central and Eastern European countries from the closed non-democratic system of the plan economy; the transformations that occurred over the last 10–15 years showed the readiness of Central and Eastern European countries to join the Western world and

“take over” the expertise of the Western world;

- transformations marking the “entrance” of the Central and Eastern European countries to the European Union, their adaptation to the further development in the integral space of the European Union, as well as adaptation of the entire European Union to the new environment; these currently undergoing transformations show common changes within the increased space of the European Union.

This approach allows us to conclude that the development of the *integral cultural*, as well as political, economic, informational and other *space in Europe* embraces several key stages, including:

- transformations in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, prior to the integration of these countries into the European Union;
- transformations in the entire European Union, especially in the Central and Eastern European countries that have newly entered the Union (these transformations are intensely happening there).

Transformations are particularly important for the states of Central and Eastern Europe. While assessing opportunities and perspectives for the further economic and social growth in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, it is essential to consider a number of factors impelled by *political, economic and social transformations*, which took place in these countries over the last years and are still on. Taking into account that transitions indicate *the major trend* of political, social and economic development of these countries, the

states of Eastern and Central Europe are referred to as *transition countries*.

Political, economic and social development in the transition countries is characterized by some features *common* to all of these countries as well as by *specific* features characteristic only of some transition states (Melnikas, 2002). The ability to determine both general and specific features of transformations allows us to define the situation in a particular country, the priorities of its development as well as identifying and solving most urgent problems.

In determining general features representing major trends of the political, social and economic development in the transition period, the following most important issues should be emphasized:

1. *Constant orientation toward the new quality the life*, implying that in the period of transition efforts are made to realize the norms, standards, ideals, and stereotypes of the new quality of life. Changes associated with the quality of life take place in the period of transition and are aimed at changing life for the better. Thus, a new society based on such values as democracy, humanism and openness as well as declaring the priority of human rights, freedom and well-being has been formed in the states of Eastern and Central Europe in the time of transition.
2. *A complex character of transition*, meaning that the major changes are complex, embracing major areas of political, social and economic life as well as the development of modern technologies, environment protection, laws and other areas of social impor-

tance. A *complex character* of transition may be considered as one of the major features characteristic of the development of Eastern and Central European countries. In the recent 10–15 years, the qualitative changes have taken place in the political, social and economic structures of society, while a new scale of values, life styles and priorities has been introduced and a new social order combining the elements of Western democracy and some Eastern Europe's traditions has been established.

3. Moreover, the complexity of transitions in these countries manifests itself in versatile effects on various sides of life, which may be controversially assessed, because the results of the changes are not definitely outlined. *The uneven character of transition* implies that social changes often take place as *a leap* forward from one quality to another. These leaps are also characterized by *profound and sudden* changes. It is important to note that in the period of transition, society may experience *shocks*, when the traditional values and priorities are suddenly rejected and replaced with some new values of which people have only superficial knowledge and are not ready to adopt them. In the transition period, the formation of some political, social, economic, cultural and ideological vacuum is usually observed in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe due to a sudden character of changes, often accompanied by instability.
4. *The simultaneous and controversial character of transitions*, meaning

that different transitions may and do take place simultaneously, being, however, *conflicting and imbalanced*. As a result, the situation arises when one kind of transition contradicts the others, which in turn may cause problems and even stresses in society. The experience of the states of Eastern and Central Europe provides a lot of examples of controversial transitions when, e. g., social and economic changes contradict the political transitions, while changes taking place in some countries of Eastern and Central Europe do not conform with the transitions occurring in other states or regions of the same territory. Such negative phenomena, hampering the advance of the above states, call for the idea of *harmonizing* the transitions of controversial character, implying the balancing of different changes.

5. *The innovative character of transitions*, meaning that any transition accumulates some novelty. In the transition period, the *innovative potential* is intensively developed by providing conditions for innovative activities. The novel character of transitions may be expressed *in two ways*: first, the conditions are created *for adapting well-known models and solutions to some situation in a new way*. In this case, they are considered to be innovative. Second, *completely new, previously unknown models and solutions* are made. In this case, these newly created patterns, having no analogues, are considered to be innovations. The development of two types of novelties in the transition period emphasizes

the importance of innovative activities for the countries of Eastern and Central Europe.

6. *The positive character of transitions*, implying that transitions yield *positive results* in most cases. In spite of the fact that both positive and negative results are actually obtained in the conditions of transition, the predominance of positive results is a particular feature of transitions.
7. *The idealistic and disappointing character of transitions*, meaning that this period is characterized by the recurrence of “searching for the ideals – disappointment” cycles. The above cyclicity shows that at the beginning of transition the solution of urgent problems is usually associated with the achievement of certain ideals, while later the period of disappointment both in the very ideals and in the transition itself and its outcome follows. For example, in the transition period in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe, much was expected from democratization and free market development. However, later the community was disappointed with the results. At the same time, the “idealization–disappointment” cycles demonstrate the maturing of society in the course of transition as well as its adaptability to the actual environment.
8. *Openness* in the period of transitions, meaning that the tradition of *openness, publicity* and “*transparency*” becomes established making it possible to develop democracy and free market economy. However, it is evident

that the patterns of “open society” being formed in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe do not completely conform with the long-standing traditions of openness existing in Western countries, especially in Europe. Nevertheless, the developing tendency of openness in the states of Eastern and Central Europe is generally considered as one of the major development trends in the transition period.

9. *Harmonization of objective and subjective elements*, implying that the character and orientation of transitions largely depend on a number of *objective factors* characterizing the objectively existing background of political, social and economic transformations as well as on *subjective elements* reflecting personal interests, the influence and lobbyist activities of various subjects (i.e. individuals, groups of people of various levels, clans, etc.). The above objective and subjective elements are characterized by a certain degree of coordination and harmonization, therefore the harmony between these two factors should be considered as a naturally determined phenomenon of the development of Eastern and Central European countries in the transition period. It should be noted that *subjective factors* play a particularly important role: the interests of individual persons, groups of people of various levels, clans, etc. have a considerable effect on the political, social and economic development of these countries.
10. *Integrity and a comparable character of transitions on a world scale*, mean-

ing that local transitions are integrated into the higher-level transition systems. This indicates that the above transitions are of an international character, promoting the process of globalization as well as internationalization of political, social and economic development and demonstrating that they are comparable and can be coordinated at an international level. The transitions taking place in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe are of paramount importance for their integration into the global and international political, social, economic, cultural and information structures, as well as are a factor contributing to the convergence of the mentality and lifestyles of the inhabitants of various countries.

11. *The resonance factor*, meaning that transitions of various origin and nature may coincide in time. Therefore, the community has to endure a *heavy burden of a number of transitions* taking place simultaneously. The phenomenon of resonance manifests itself as the timing of political, social and economic changes causing a heavy burden on the community, which may threaten its safety and stability.

The above-listed phenomena show *the general trends* of transitions which are *universal* and *similar* in all states of Eastern and Central Europe. Along with these major trends, some *specific features* may be observed in the political, social and economic development of particular countries or groups of countries. The above trends are particularly characteristic of transitions taking place in the Baltic countries, includ-

ing Lithuania. The Baltic region is specific in many ways, therefore transitions taking place in it may be considered a specific case of conformity to natural laws.

The following features of transitions may be specially mentioned as mostly characteristic of the Baltic states, including Lithuania:

1. *A higher resonance of transitions*, implying that in the Baltic states some additional transitions associated with regaining independence and forming new modern states as well as the priority of integration into the Western system took place alongside the political, social and economic transitions characteristic of other countries of Eastern and Central Europe. This means that the transition resonance in the Baltic states was caused not only by the democratization of market relations common to Eastern and Central European countries, but also by the transitions associated with a very rapid development of the new national states and their integration into the Western system. Thus, transitions in the Baltic states were more diverse and extensive than those in other countries of Eastern and Central Europe. Therefore, it may be stated that *the higher transition resonance* is a major characteristic feature of the Baltic region.
2. *The conflicting character of national priorities and regional integration and internationalization trends*, indicating that *two opposite as well as mutually complementary tendencies* are developed in the Baltic states. On the one hand, national businesses are seeking *autonomy*, even *closeness* and *self-iso-*

*lation*, trying to get established on the national market by the exclusive right. On the other hand, the tendency of integration of the whole Baltic region and the cooperation of *three Baltic states* in political, social and economic areas is constantly growing. Though three Baltic states often *compete* with each other, more and more possibilities are revealed to pursue the *unified policy* of cultural, economic and information development.

Needless to say, some *more specific features of transitions* taking place in the Baltic states may be identified. Undoubtedly, they may refer to one of these countries, for example, Lithuania. The transitions taking place only in one of the states may be referred to as *individual features* characterizing the development of a particular state.

Thus, the analysis of individual features of transitions taking place in Lithuania enables us to determine the effect of various geographical characteristics (e. g. the configuration of neighboring countries, the exceptional geographic position of Kaliningrad region and the like) on their development. Some other individual and specific factors also influence the transition processes in Lithuania. Among them are cultural and historical features (e. g. the influence of the Catholic ethics, the development of Lithuanian state and the formation of Lithuanian nation, urbanization, the location of agricultural zones, etc.).

The specific features of transitions taking place in Lithuania complete the general system of naturally determined trends of development in the period of transforma-

tions. The proper understanding of these phenomena helps to improve the political, cultural, social and economic life.

### **Transformations in Central and Eastern Europe: liberalization processes**

The modern political, economic and social development in Lithuania and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe can be defined by several features. One of the most significant among them is inclination towards real *liberalization* which may be seen in the *steadily decreasing role of the state in economic regulation*: the pace and trends of economic growth in Central and Eastern Europe gradually become determined by the initiatives, aptness and trends in the international market conjuncture of the local and foreign economic subjects rather than by the political decisions and activities of the Central and Eastern European states.

What is more, liberalization in the Central and Eastern European countries is unique by reason of certain circumstances that had no historic comparisons in the global practice.

There are some *specific factors* of liberalization in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

*The first factor is a specific image of state importance*, which has developed historically in Central and Eastern Europe, portraying outcomes of the previous social and economic growth. The market relations in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe had been started to set up quite recently, besides, the circumstances and historical background for these relations are completely different from those

of modern Western countries. In the West, market relations were undergoing evolution under a gradual development of *industrial and post-industrial* society, considering that in Central and Eastern Europe novel market relations developed very rapidly and unevenly. In fact, market economy in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe started developing just 12–15 years ago, in the end of the last century when the industrial and post-industrial society had been already created and an enormous economic and especially industrial potential had been accumulated; by the way, this potential reached rather a high technological level for that époque and held orientations towards the influence of science-driven production and modern industries and technologies. This economic potential was based on a *centralized plan system*, consequently, in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe a tradition of the *absolute role of the state in the economic development* was formed: historically, nobody else but the state played the most important role in the economic growth. The importance and absolutism of the centralized plan system and the state role in economic development were embodied in Central and Eastern Europe in the long-lasting and deep-rooted tradition, therefore, this tradition inevitably influenced the economic growth of the countries also later, when the outdated plan system collapsed quite unexpectedly. This means that when market relations started developing 12–15 years ago in Central and Eastern Europe, this system inherited certain *relics of the old system*: it may be conceived as a symbiosis of the economic system of Central and Eastern Europe both *in the specific “Western” ele-*

*ments of market economy and certain state absolutism tradition.*

The aforementioned factor is very important for the reason that of understanding enables us to assess the attitude towards the role of the state and its power to influence the economic and social growth in the contemporary Central and Eastern Europe. It may seem surprising, but even today, more than a decade after the implementation of the major attitudes towards the market relations in these countries, in fact, all societal layers still strongly believe that the state remains to be a leading subject in the economic advancement of the country. This attitude is typical both of *business community* who regard all their economic troubles and business failures as absolutely related to the state and, on the other hand, to *experts of various spheres* who are free-lance employees and relate their possibilities to advance economically and seek for well-being also greatly depending on the state; by the way, conclusions of this kind were made a number of times based on different research results (Melnikas, 2002). This allows us to state that in the mind of the contemporary societies of Central and Eastern European countries the role of the state is understood not only as a *critical* but also as the *main* factor for their economic and social headway.

*The second factor* illustrating the specificity of liberalization in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe is the fact that these countries today badly lack resources and opportunities to more rapidly achieve at least the minimal level of the standards of development and well-being existing in modern Western countries. This means that Central and Eastern Europe will inevitably

have to implement essentially different, if compared to Western countries, *patterns* to ensure economic growth and the rise of well-being: implementation of these patterns requires focusing resources and development on critical to each country *priorities* that should be associated both to maximization of the pace of the growth and to the endeavors to ensure a possibly more intensive increase of the value added. It is clear that under these circumstances, an adequate action of the state as an active subject of economic development should emanate. This action should address the *purposeful* establishment of the priorities for the economic development and the implementation of the main priorities.

*The third* factor picturing the specificity of liberalization in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe is that among social layers in many of these countries the mentality of “*standards of double moral*” still prevails. This mentality, which developed over a long period of the reign of the totalitarian system (in fact, up to the end of the last century), expresses a very popular in society *incompatibility* of the individual or group interests to the norms of social accountability. There is a probability of the incompatibility of this kind in any, even very progressive, society, including the Western ones, and this incompatibility is *especially distinct* in Central and Eastern Europe. This incompatibility sometimes takes very threatening shapes: it can be seen in the rising social and economic differentiation inside societies of Central and Eastern Europe, in the evident lack of social accountability among political and economic elite, or in the dominating clan interests when working on live problems

of society and its well-being. In this regard, it is important to note that manifestations of the mentality of “*standards of double moral*” are quite important as a factor that can *ambiguously* influence the process of liberalization and sometimes bring negative consequences to society.

The circumstances mentioned above, as well as some other factors, are very important when assessing the possibilities and perspectives for economic liberalization in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe. It is important to consider these circumstances in the context of integration of these countries into the European Union, especially because within the *integrated* economic domain of the European Union these countries and their economic subjects encounter many new problems; among them, as particularly important, can be mentioned the problems of *compatibility of economic subjects* and of the *rise of household well-being and improvement of social security*. By the way, understanding of these problems in the *context* of *liberalization* and the ability to deal with them considering the conditions of the integration of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe into the European Union is a very important precondition for ensuring a successful implementation of integration processes and a high pace of the further political, social and economic development.

### **Equal rights and the main priorities of cultural policies to be implemented in the context of the European integration**

A significant feature of the transformations that took place in Central and Eastern Europe is associated with the changes in the

area of *equal rights*. These changes have some conflicting aspects: on the one hand, in the transition period, the situation in the area of equal rights was improved because the problems associated with their absence in the time preceding the transformation were solved in many fields; on the other hand, new problems arose in the area of equal rights in the period of transition.

These problems indicate the conflicting character of transformations and are also associated with the complicated integration processes in Europe and the expansion of the European Union.

The solution of the problem of providing equal rights is an integral part of the formation of an integral cultural space in Europe.

In equal rights society, the values and people’s views of this idea and its significance make an essential cultural characteristic because the culture of society and the trends of its development largely depend on the treatment and evaluation of the concept of equal rights.

Equal rights as a value are among the highest priorities in society. The implementation of this principle in practice shows the level of societal development and the ability to solve the problems arising in society.

The concept of equal rights may be treated differently. In more general terms, it may be described as a situation when the conditions of work and social activity of various people are not affected by the factors not relevant to these activities.

This definition actually implies that when the principle of equal rights is observed, the attitudes to people and the conditions of their work and social activity are

determined by the results obtained and the quality of these results rather than by other unrelated issues.

Hence it follows that the inequality of human rights is manifested in the evaluation of people and their activities based on some insignificant factors which cannot actually affect the results achieved by these people.

The assessment of the observance of equal rights may be based on various characteristics which can be classified in the following way:

1. The scope of evaluation of equal rights:
  - global, from the perspectives of large civilization, or international area (e. g. Europe or the European Union or its large regions),
  - from the perspective of nations and the societies of various states and countries,
  - from the perspective of regions, agglomerations, towns, settlements and communities,
  - from the perspective of various organizations,
  - from the perspective of various social groups and strata,
  - from the perspective of the family and relatives,
  - from the perspective of an individual.
2. Biological, biosocial, cultural and ethnocultural aspects in assessing equal rights based on the following characteristics of an individual or groups of individuals:
  - sex, demographical characteristics,
  - race, nation, ethnical group,
  - confession, ideological, political views,

- sexual orientation,
- ethical and aesthetical views,
- physical and psychological state, lifestyle in a physical and biosocial sense.

3. Economic, social, professional aspects and status in assessing the observance of equal rights based on the following individual and group characteristics:
  - financial state,
  - area of employment,
  - educational level,
  - profession,
  - social status associated with the membership of some social organization or group,
  - conditions of life and activities.

These and other examples demonstrate the variety of approaches to assessing the situation with equal rights.

In considering the prospects of creating the integral cultural space in Europe, the following aspects of the implementation of equal rights should be emphasized:

- the provision of equal rights to various countries and regions for social and economic development,
- the provision of equal rights to various ethnic, confessional and social groups and strata,
- the provision of equal rights to people of various professions engaged in various types of activities,
- the provision of equal rights to men and women.

Priority should be given to the above aspects in the cultural space of the whole Europe and of Central and Eastern Europe in particular. It is of vital importance for solving the various problems associated with European integration and the expansion of the European Union.

There are the main priorities of cultural policies to be implemented in the situation of the integration of Eastern and Central European countries into the European Union.

Integration of the Eastern and Central European countries into the European Union does not only show the growth of the European Union, but also characterizes the core transformation of the entire European cultural space. This means that an important outcome of the transformations in Eastern and Central Europe has been the fact that integration of new countries into the European Union gives an impulse for the development of an integral cultural space of the entire Europe. Based on this approach towards transformations, two key priorities of cultural policies can be defined:

- cultural policies that are designed to popularize on a mass scale and affirm the progressive values of humanism and democracy, stereotypes of social behaviour, as well as lifestyle patterns and standards of moral and spiritual life in the Eastern and Central European countries;
- cultural policies that are designed to guarantee that the traditional Western European society is able to consider the Eastern and Central European society as equal and compatible with the norms of Western culture and lifestyles, and the progressive historical and cultural experiences of the Eastern and Central European countries and their elitist spheres are integrated into the overall system of the European cultural system.

For the sake of the implementation of these two priorities on the pan-European scale, special programmes of a complex character should be introduced:

1. Programmes of cultural heritage preservation, conservation and actualization of all European countries, regions, as well as ethnic, confessional and other groups and layers; the programmes of such kind should ensure that the culture of each country, region as well as ethnic, confessional or other social groups and the layers preserves elements comprising the uniqueness of each of these countries in the context of the basic norms and standards of the European cultural space. These programmes should embrace a broad panorama of diverse spheres of culture and art (cultural heritage in architecture and urbanism, use of different languages and dialects, visual art, theatre, music, literature and other spheres), as well as knowledge of history and the past, ethnography, traditions of trade and professional activities, traditions of interpersonal communication, community and social life, and traditions of attitude to nature (by the way, special attention should be paid to the heritage of vulnerable and fragile cultures of nations or groups with a small or diminishing number of citizens). These programmes should be developed and implemented applying various means of science, education, mass media, culture and art, as well as law, economics or even politics.
2. Programmes for an integrated adaptation of the European dimension in various cultural spaces: such programmes

should address the coexistence of various cultures and their reciprocal harmonization, ensuring universal cultural tolerance and mutual understanding. The central goal of these programmes is to achieve that the basic standards of European culture become a priority to every European citizen, and within the integral European cultural space there should prevail general integrated characteristics, norms and dimensions typical of all cultures of the European countries, regions, ethnic, confessional or other social groups or layers. It is important to note that one of the core dimensions of the integral Europe is a genuine respect to all cultures of all countries, regions, social groups and layers; this dimension is principal when ensuring opportunities to achieve a synergistic effect based on the symbiosis, integration and a synthesis of various cultures. It is obvious that all programmes of this kind should embrace the whole Europe and the means of a very broad spectrum.

3. Programmes for elimination of unacceptable factors within humanism and democracy. All programmes of this kind should be executed with the complex use of the entire potential of the administration of the states, their education, scientific and mass media systems. The programmes should include strategies strengthening the moral and legal responsibility for the actions that do not conform to the standards of humanism and democracy, fight against approval of these actions or inadequate prevention. It is absolutely critical to achieve that within the integrated Eu-

ropean cultural space cultural mechanisms should develop, dismissing any possibility to develop, show or spread an inappropriate conduct.

The further development and implementation of the programmes of this kind should encourage creation of a new society and provide preconditions for the further cultural, economic and social progress.

## **Conclusions**

The central indicator of the processes of integration and political, social, economic development is the appearance of an integrated cultural space in Europe that is strongly influenced by many factors, including the expansion of the European Union, especially the integration of the Eastern and Central European countries into the European Union.

The integral cultural space in Europe is defined as a general system of priority values, stereotypes of social behaviour, lifestyle patterns and moral and spiritual standards typical of all layers of the European countries where the integrity of the cultural space might be understood as the affinity of different systems that can be comprehended as an assumption for association of different cultural spaces into integral cultural spaces.

Processes of the development of an integral cultural space in Europe are very complex and controversial, and in this course various problems and conflicts arise, which cause a real threat to the further process of the European integration and the expansion of the European Union; therefore, special attention should be paid to the solution of these problems and conflicts.

To encourage the creation of an integral cultural space in Europe, the appropriate cultural policies are necessary to be implemented in the entire Europe. These policies may embrace many priorities, including:

- preservation of the cultural diversity of all European countries, as well as of ethnic, confessional or other social groups or layers; heritage preservation of these countries and the further integration of these cultures into the overall process of cultural development;
- adaptation and dissemination of the integrated European dimensions in the whole Europe;
- elimination of inappropriate factors within humanism and democracy.

The priorities of cultural policies are especially important for the Central European countries, and for a better implementation of these priorities we propose

initiating a complex research and diverse scientific and educational projects.

Considering the problems of creating an integral cultural space in Europe, the emphasis should be placed on the provision of equal rights.

The attitudes to the significance of the principle of equal rights characterize a society and its culture, while the attitudes to this aspect as a priority reflect the system of values of society. This means that when creating an integral cultural space, the attitudes to the value and implementation of equal rights should be coordinated. A significant consideration is the orientation of these attitudes to democratic and humanistic values.

Creating an integral cultural space in Europe requires a comprehensive investigation. The research into this problem, especially in its political and administration aspects, is very promising.

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## **TRANSFORMACIJŲ PROCESAI RYTŲ IR VIDURIO EUROPOJE: LIBERALIZACIJA, BENDRA KULTŪROS ERDVĖ IR SOCIALINĖ APLINKA PLĖTOJANT EKONOMIKĄ**

**Borisas Melnikas**

S a n t r a u k a

Straipsnyje kompleksiskai nagrinėjami sudėtingi ir prieštaringi bendros ekonominės ir kultūros erdvės Europoje formavimosi procesai. Daugiausia dėmesio skiriama transformacijoms Rytų ir Vidurio Europos šalyse kaip esminiam bendros erdvės visoje Europoje formavimosi veiksniumi, pažymint tas transformacijų procesų aplinkybes, kurios turi įtakos įvairių visuomenės sluoksnių ir grupių lygių galimybių sampratos pokyčiams bei šių galimybių principams, išreiškia prioritėtines vertybes, kurias siekiama įgyvendinti bendroje ekonominėje ir kultūros erdvėje Europoje.

Parodyta, kad lygių galimybių samprata ir realūs gebėjimai jas įgyvendinti apibūdina visuomenės brandą ir raidos perspektyvas, iš jų – ekonominės raidos perspektyvas. Ypač svarbu, jog transformacijų procesai, per pastaruosius keliolika metų vykę Rytų ir Vidurio Europos šalyse, daugiausia išreiškia įvairiuose visuomenės sluoksniuose ir grupėse išryškėjusią pozicijų lygių galimybes kaitą.

Straipsnyje pateikiami bendros kultūros erdvės formavimuisi Europoje skirtų tyrimų rezultatai. Išryškinti svarbiausi bendros kultūros erdvės po-

žymiai, atskleistos tokios erdvės formavimosi problemos, ypač tos, kurias lemia Europos Sąjungos plėtra bei Rytų ir Vidurio Europos šalyse vykstantys socialiniai ir ekonominiai pokyčiai. Suformuluoti esminiai transformacijų procesų bei Europos Sąjungos plėtros dėsniniai, išryškinti lygių galimybių užtikrinimo dēlei spręstinių problemų sprendimo būdai ir prioritetai.

Straipsnyje išryškunami liberalizavimo procesų prioritetai ir ypatumai, parodyta liberalizavimo įtaka socialinei raidai ir ekonomikos augimui.

Straipsnyje pateikiama pasiūlymų, skirtų ekonominei politikai, taip pat kitomis priemonėmis spręsti problemas, kylančias formuojantis bendrai kultūros erdvei Europoje. Tokių priemonių tarpe ypač veiksmingomis laikytinos suderintų nacionalinių ir tarpautinių programų, skirtų plėtoti bendrąją kultūros erdvę Europoje, rengimas ir įgyvendinimas. Straipsnyje detalai apibūdinamas tokių programų turinys ir nurodomi jų prioritetai.

*Pagindiniai žodžiai:* transformacijos, bendra erdvė, Rytų ir Vidurio Europa, liberalizavimas, lygių galimybės.