

Equal Rights and Transition Processes in the East – and Central European Countries

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

The paper has used the outcomes of the research done over the recent several years, dedicated to the diagnostics of the problems of transformations as well as economic and social development in Central and Eastern Europe with a special reference to the development of the integral cultural space and human rights.

Major findings show that the creation and development of the integral cultural space in Europe is a very complex and controversial process and in this course various problems and conflicts arise. Therefore, to encourage the creation of the integral cultural space in Europe appropriate cultural policies are necessary to be implemented in the Europe. These policies may embrace many priorities including

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

For implementation of key priorities of cultural policies the use of a number of pan-European scale special programmes is suggested.

The new non-traditional ideas of possible economic and social development in Central and Eastern Europe are discussed.

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

Pagrindinės sąvokos: *transformacijos, bendra kultūros erdvė, Rytų ir Vidurio Europa, lygios galimybės.*

Introduction

The 21st century is the age of increasingly developing transformations in the whole world and all spheres of life. Transformations embody the most important attribute 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 process of transformation as well as globalization a society of a new type is being formed, with its typical new values and striving, which creates different patterns of lifestyle and is confronted with new problems and searches for solutions to these problems.

Globalization processes are very well showing themselves in modern Europe. It is quite

possible to state that the key-feature of globalization in Europe is the fact that the integral European society is being born, which creates and builds an integral cultural space as well as integral spaces for social, economic, political, technological, ecological and information development.

Creation of the integral cultural space in Europe makes not only preconditions for basic change in life environment and conditions of all European nations, but also determines the fact that a brand new quality is being shaped, both of the society itself and of each European citizen. On the one hand, the development of the 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 the creation and inclusion of an adequate policy in the sphere of culture.

The formation of the 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 the society is important for developing new approaches to the creation of the 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 research problem. The goal of such research may be defined as updating the 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 transformations which took place in Europe because the latter could allow the identification of changes in the area of equal rights. The relationships between 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 the integral cultural space in Europe should be considered taking into account general conditions and specific features of transformations which took place in this period.

The paper presents the research results obtained by the author which indicate the emergence of new trends and challenges in the area of creating the integral cultural space in Europe taking account of the need to ensure equal rights to all members of the society.

1. Integral cultural space in Europe and the provision of equal rights: the main priorities

1.1. The concept of the integral cultural space in Europe

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; Katsioloudes, 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 the younger members and something (as in the case of morals, laws and customs) that shapes behaviour (Fraerman et al., 1996; Hofstede, 2000).

Development of the integral cultural space in Europe not only makes preconditions for basic change in life environment and conditions of all European nations, but also determines the fact that a brand new quality is being shaped, both of the society itself and of each European citizen. Growth of the 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 integration of Eastern and Central European countries into the European Union not only indicates the quantitative growth of the European Union (increase in the number of member states, the number of their population, overall territories and economic potential) but also qualitative transformation in 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 to the formation of the integral cultural space in Europe.

The development of the integral cultural space in Europe, taking into account the situation of the integration of the Eastern and Central European countries to 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 is inevitably causing new prob-

lems and new conflicts, and their solutions require that an adequate policy should be created, including the sphere of culture. This means that identification of the new challenges for cultural policies and understanding of the essence of these challenges, as well as capability to treat them properly, makes their tasks of a high priority in the situation of the growth of the European Union (Melnikas, 2002).

The importance of the tasks mentioned earlier 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 the integral cultural space is a striking sign of the contemporary society in Europe, which allows making a complex definition of political, social, economic and technological process development. The integral cultural space in Europe can be perceived as a portmanteau concept. 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 to 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 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 understood. And the opposite: 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 the picture of great differences, one may say that the society of these countries does not share the integral cultural space.

When giving comments on the concept of the integral cultural space, it is necessary to accentuate several conditions. First, this definition suggests that one might acknowledge the existence of different systems values, stereotypes of social behaviour, lifestyle patterns and moral and spiritual standards, typical to different countries and societal layers. Similarity or affinity of different systems can be comprehended as an as-

sumption for association of different cultural spaces into integral cultural spaces. Next, this definition demonstrates the idea that the integral cultural space conveys the situation where all key-elements of cultural spaces of different countries and societal layers: this means that the main precondition for the integral cultural space formation 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 further growth of these cultures: the critical role of each country and societal layer development falls on the processes that start inferring as general processes of the integral cultural space.

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

1.2. Problems arising in the situation of the development of the integral cultural space in Europe

During the development of the integral European cultural space, in the situation of European integration and 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 in consecutive development of processes of the actual integration into Europe.

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

1. Immense cultural differentiation among different countries, regions and social layers: the differentiation of this kind is influenced by way of 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 Europe or even the world;

2. Various ethnic, confessional or social conflicts, were existing in the history and still are present in some secret ways; and the relics of these conflicts: there are many cases in modern

Europe when various historically developed conflicts and their relics interfere into the development of the integral cultural space;

3. Disproportion in the momentum of technological, economic and social, as well as cultural development: technological progress and growth of economic well being is 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 cultural and spiritual development to economic well being and technological opportunities can be observed: this inadequacy provokes decline of moral norms, deprivation of social accountability and causes other negative consequences;

4. Too deep cultural insularity seen in particular countries and influencing lack of tolerance to other cultures, individual and group egotism, as well as insufficient capabilities to adapt to intense social and cultural changes: cultural insularity and 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 lack of administrative capabilities necessary for partnership development and intercultural and multicultural exchange elaboration: the policies in the 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 developing in the construction of the integral European cultural space, when we are working on crucial issues of cultural policies related to further European integration and development of the European Union.

1.3. The provision of equal rights as the highest priority in the process of creating the integral cultural space in Europe

The solution of the problem of providing equal rights is an integral part of the formation of the 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 the society and the trends of its development largely depend on the treatment

and evaluation of equal rights concept.

It can be assumed that equal rights as a value are among the highest priorities in the society. The implementation of this principle in practice shows the level of societal development and the ability to solve the problems arising in the 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 for 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 quality of these results rather than by other not related issues.

It follows that inequality of human rights is manifested by 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 equal rights implementation 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.

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

2. Transformations in the Central and Eastern Europe and the provision of equal rights

2.1. Transformations in the Central and Eastern Europe as a system of complex factors

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 stud-

ies 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 at a very broad and detailed 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 worthwhile mentioning that within 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 the plain adaptation of these standards, applying 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 great influence on the entire European Union, and is a crucial factor for the changes both in Western Europe and the whole world (Melnikas, 2002; Melnikas, Reichelt, 2004).

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

- transformations, marking the “exit” of the Central and Eastern European countries from the close non-democratic system of the plan economy; these transformations that occurred over the last 10-15 years, showed 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 further development in the integral space of the European Union, as well as adaptation of the entire European Union to the new environment; these cur-

rently undergoing transformations, show common changes within the increased space of the European Union.

This approach lets us conclude that 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 to 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).

A significant feature of the transformations which took place in Central and Eastern Europe is associated with the changes in the area of equal rights. These changes have some conflicting aspects as follows:

- 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.

An effective approach to solving newly arising problems in the area of equal rights is the development and implementation of cultural policy aimed at creating the integral cultural space in Europe.

2.2. The main typicalities of the transformations in the Central and Eastern Europe

Transformations are particularly important for the states of Central and Eastern Europe. While assessing opportunities and perspectives for 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 *a major trend* of political, social and economic development of these coun-

tries, 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, B., 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 political, social and economic development in a transition period, the following most important issues should be emphasized:

1. *Constant orientation toward the new quality life*, implying that in the period of transition the efforts are made to realize the norms, standards, ideals, and stereotypes of new quality life. The changes associated with the quality of life take place in the period of transition, which 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 transitions*, meaning that 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 importance. A *complex character* of transitions may be considered one of the major features characteristic of the development of Eastern and Central European countries. In recent 10–15 years the qualitative changes have taken place in the political, social and economic structures of the 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 transitions*, implying 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 the society may experience *shocks*, when the

traditional values and priorities are suddenly rejected, being replaced with some new values, of which the people have only superficial knowledge not being 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. *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 is contrary to the others, which in turn may cause problems and even stresses in the society. The experience of the states of Eastern and Central Europe provides a lot of examples of controversial transitions, when, say, social and economic changes contradict the political transitions, while the 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 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 intensely developed by providing the 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 the 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. *A 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 it was much expected from democratization and free market development. However, later the community was much disappointed with the results obtained. At the same time, the cycles of “idealization – disappointment” demonstrate the maturing of the society in the course of transition as well as its adaptability to 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 “the 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, 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 certain degree of coordination and harmonization, therefore the harmony of these two factors should be considered as naturally determined phenomenon of the development of Eastern and Central European countries in the transition period. It should be noted that *subjective factors* play 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 comparable character of transitions on a world scale*, meaning that local transitions are integrated into the higher – level tran-

sition 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. It may be stated that 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 being a factor contributing to the convergence of the mentality and lifestyles of the inhabitants of various countries.

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

The above – listed appropriate phenomena show *general trends* of transitions, which are *universal* and *similar* in all the states of Eastern and Central Europe. Along with these major trends some *specific features* may be observed in 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, including Lithuania. The Baltic region is specific in many ways, therefore the 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. *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 very rapid development of new national states and their integration into the Western system. Thus, transitions in the Bal-

tic states were more diverse and extensive than those taking place 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 – isolation*, 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, that 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. configuration of neighboring countries, 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 a general system of naturally determined trends of development in the periods of transformations. The proper understanding of these phenomena helps to improve the political, cultural, social and economic life.

Modern political, economic and social development in Lithuania and other countries of the Central and Eastern Europe can be defined by several features. One of the most significant among them is inclination towards real *liberalization*, which can be observed in the *steadily de-*

creasing role of the states in economic regulation: the pace and trends of economic growth in Central and Eastern Europe gradually becomes determined by the initiatives, aptness and trends in the international market conjuncture of the local and foreign economic subjects rather than political decisions and activities of the Central and Eastern European states.

What is more, liberalization in the countries of Central and Eastern European countries is unique by reason of certain circumstances that had not had historic comparisons in the global practice.

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

The first factor among them is *specific image of the state importance*, which has developed historically in the 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 their evolution under the gradual development of the *industrial and post-industrial* society, considering that in the Central and Eastern Europe novel market relations developed very rapidly and unevenly. In fact, market economy in the countries of the 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 enormous economic and especially industrial potential had been accumulated; by the way, this potential reached rather high technological level for that époque and held orientations towards the influence of science-driven production and modern industries and technologies. This economic potential developed based on *centralized plan system*, consequently, in the countries of the Central and Eastern Europe the 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. Importance and absolutism of the centralized plan system and the state role in economic development was embodied in the Central and Eastern Europe in the long-lasting and deep-rooted tradition, therefore, this tradition inevitably influenced economic growth of the country and afterwards, when the out-

dated plan system collapsed quite unexpectedly. This means that when market relations started developing 12–15 years ago in the Central and Eastern Europe, this system inherited certain *relics of the old system*: it can be conceived as symbiosis of the economic system of the Central and Eastern Europe both *in specific “Western” elements of market economy*, and certain *state absolutism tradition*.

The aforementioned factor is very important for the reason that understanding of this enables us to assess the attitude towards the role of the state and its power to influence economic and social growth existing in the contemporary Central and Eastern Europe. It may seem surprising but even today, after more than decade after the implementation of the major attitudes towards the market relations development in these countries, in fact, all societal layers still strongly believe that the state remains to be a leading subject in economic advancement of the countries. This attitude is typical both to *business community*, who envision all their economic troubles and business failures, 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, B. 2002). This allows us to state in the mind of the contemporary societies of countries of the Central and Eastern Europe the role of the state is understood not only as *critical*, but also as the *main* factor for their economic and social headway.

The second factor, illustrating specificity of liberalization in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe is the fact that in these countries today there is a serious lack of 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 substantially different, if compared to Western countries, *patterns* ensuring economic growth and rise of well being: implementation of these patterns should guarantee focus of 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 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 implementation of the main priorities.

The *third* factor, picturing specificity of liberalization in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe is that among social layers in many of these countries 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, by the end of the last century), expresses very popular in society *incompatibility* of the individual or group interests to the norms of social accountability. There is 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 turns into very threatening shapes: it can be seen in rising social and economic differentiation inside societies of the Central and Eastern Europe, evident lack of social accountability among political and economic elite, or dominating clan interests, when working on live problems of the society and its well being. In this regard it is important to note that manifestations of mentality of “*standards of double moral*” are quite important as a factor that can *ambiguously* influence the process of liberalization and sometimes bring negative subsequences to the society.

The circumstances, mentioned earlier, as well as some other factors, are very important, when assessing 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 into the European Union of these countries, especially because within the *integrated* economic domain of the European Union these countries and their economic subjects experience many new problems; among them as particularly important can be mentioned the problems of *compatibility of economic subjects* and *rise of household well being and improvement of social security*. By the way, understanding of these problems in the *context* of liberalization and 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 to ensure successful implementation of integration processes and high pace of further political, social and economic development.

2.3. Priorities of cultural policies to be implemented in the situation of the integration of Eastern and Central European countries to the European Union.

Integration of the Eastern and Central European countries to 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 development of the 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 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 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 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 uniqueness of each of these countries in the context of 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 dia-

lects, 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, a special attention should be paid to the heritage of vulnerable and fragile cultures of nations or groups with small or diminishing number of citizens). These programmes should be developed and implemented applying various means of science, education, mass media, culture and art events organization, and law, economics or even politics.

2. Programmes for integrated European dimension adaptation in various cultural spaces: such programmes should address 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 the 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 to 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 synergy effect based on symbiosis, integration and synthesis of various cultures. It is obvious that all programmes of this kind should connect the whole Europe and the means of a very broad spectrum;

3. Programmes for elimination of unacceptable factors within humanism and democracy: first of all, these are programmes designed to prevent fascist, racist, nationalist, anti-Semitic manifestations; as well as programmes designed to adopt ideals of humanism, high morale, human rights and freedom and social accountability; they should include prevention of such phenomena as violence or wrong habits, etc. 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 program should include in its strategies strengthening of 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 European cultural space cultural mechanisms should develop, dismissing any possibility to emerge, show or spread inappropriate conduct (a propos, nowadays in the whole Europe, including especially the Eastern and Central Europe cases of fascist and nationalist feelings arise: this factor should be assessed as a real threat to further integration of Europe; therefore, an intense combat against the actions of this kind should be performed employing all cultural policy, legal and administrative means. The programmes discussed, along with other programmes meant to be implemented in the whole Europe, could be assessed as an important precondition for creation of the integral European cultural space in the environment of the European integration and the expansion of the European Union.

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

Conclusions

The central indicator of the processes of integration and political, social, economic development is the creation 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 to 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 development of the integral cultural space in Europe are very complex and controversial; and in this course various problems and conflicts arise, which cause a real threat for 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 the integral cultural space in Europe, the appropriate cultu-

ral policies are necessary to be implemented in the entire Europe. These policies may embrace many priorities, including:

- preservation of cultural diversity of all European countries, as well as ethnic, confessional or other social groups or layers; heritage preservation of these countries; and 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.

Priorities of cultural policies are especially important for the Central European countries, and for better implementation of these priorities, we propose initiating complex research and diverse scientific and educational projects.

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

The attitudes to the significance of equal rights principle characterize the society and its culture, while the attitudes to this aspect as a priority reflect the system of values of the society. This means that when creating the 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.

The creation of the integral cultural space in Europe requires comprehensive investigation. The research into this problem, especially in political and administration areas, is very promising.

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Borisas Melnikas

**Lygios galimybės ir transformacijų procesai
Rytų ir Vidurio Europos šalyse**

Santrauka

Straipsnyje kompleksiskai nagrinėjami sudėtingi ir prieštaringi bendros kultūros erdvės Europoje formavimosi procesai. Daugiausia dėmesio skiriama transformacijoms Rytų ir Vidurio Europos šalyse kaip esminiam bendros kultūros erdvės visoje Europoje formavimosi veiksniai. Ypač pabrėžiamos tos transformacijų procesų aplinkybės, kurios daro įtaką įvairių visuomenės sluoksnių ir grupių lygių galimybių sampratos pokyčiams bei lygių galimybių principo įgyvendinimo perspektyvoms.

Parodyta, kad lygių galimybių principas išreiškia prioritėtines vertybes, kurias siekiama įgyvendinti bendroje kultūros erdvėje Europoje: lygių galimybių samprata ir realūs gebėjimai jas įgyvendinti apibūdina visuomenės brandą bei raidos perspektyvas.

Lygių galimybių principo įgyvendinimas nagrinėjamas atsižvelgiant ir į bendruosius kultūros erdvės Europoje pokyčius, ir į specifinius transformacijų Rytų ir Vidurio Europoje ypatumus. Ypač svarbu, kad transformacijų procesai, per pastaruosius keliolika metų vykę Rytų ir Vidurio Europos šalyse, išreiškia įvairiuose visuomenės sluoksniuose ir grupėse išryškėjusią požiūrių į lygias galimybes kaitą.

Straipsnyje pateikiami bendros kultūros erdvės formavimuisi Europoje skirtų tyrimų rezultatai. Išryškinti svarbiausieji bendros kultūros erdvės požymiai, atskleistos šios erdvės formavimosi problemos, ypač tos, kurias nulemia Europos Sąjungos plėtra bei Rytų ir Vidurio Europos šalyse vykstantys socialiniai ir ekonominiai pokyčiai. Suformuluoti esminiai transformacijų procesų ir Europos Sąjungos plėtros dėsningumai, išryškinti lygių galimybių užtikrinimo dėl spęstinių problemų sprendimo būdai ir prioritetai.

Straipsnyje pateikiami pasiūlymai, skirti viešosios politikos ir administravimo priemonėmis spręsti problemas, kylančias formuojantis bendrai kultūros erdvei Europoje. Ypač veiksmingomis laikytinos tarpusavyje suderintų nacionalinių ir tarptautinių programų, skirtų plėtoti bendrą kultūros erdvę Europoje, parengimas ir įgyvendinimas. Straipsnyje išsamiai apibūdinamas šių programų turinys ir nurodomi jų prioritetai.

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Straipsnis pateiktas redakcijai 2006 m. birželio mėn.; recenzuotas; parengtas spausdinti 2006 m. rugsėjo mėn.

DOI: 10.5755/j01.ppa.0.17.27096