

## ***THE DOWNFALL OF MEDIA ON EUROPEAN UNION INTEGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP***

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*Abstract: When dealing with issues such as EU integration and citizenship, the natural framework of debate should be provided by the media. Nevertheless, media fails in offering an impartial framework of interpretation and vision on such matters, preferring instead to take sides with the more advantageous partner. Therefore, the structure of the following article is three-folded. Firstly, the article is focusing on the issue of integration, providing an analysis of the integration criteria and the Community acquis, as well as the degree of country compliance. Secondly, the article addresses the issue of citizenship and the manner in which citizenship is left aside in EU issues such as work migration. The third part discusses several case studies on the role media plays in these matters. One case will be the series of Romanian commercials depicting people who have been wronged by one company or another and who usually claim in the end of the commercial that they are European citizens and have corresponding rights. The second case study deals with the British campaign rejecting the Romanian and Bulgarian workforce and comprises two elements: the campaign launched by politicians against these two countries and the media campaign launched by The Economist as well as other online magazines and online media platforms attempting to correct such views and argue that Romania and Bulgaria are countries just like the rest of the EU member states, bearing both flaws and qualities.*

**Keywords:** *integration, citizenship, work migration, freedom to work, media.*

### **I. Introduction**

Choosing a topic related to European Union integration is highly challenging nowadays, especially in light of the recent campaign launched by the British politician Nigel Farage against the Romanian and Bulgarian work force. Drawing on this, the aim of this article is to analyze the impact that the process of European Union integration, as well as citizenship have on the very Europeans who adhere, by means of their country's adherence, to the European conglomerate, with its rules and mechanisms. The need of assessing such a topic is presented to us in order to provide academic background for better practices among member and aspiring countries.

Integration has been an important goal for many countries, ever since the birth of the European Communities in the 1950s. Being a part of these communities had a series of advantages as well as a feeling of protection that not many countries could enjoy by themselves. However, as the integration process deepened, accession became even more difficult and countries had to comply with a series of requests that sometimes affected them internally. This type of domestic distress can also be found in reconciling the aspect of citizenship and the rights and obligations it entails with the European Union practices on the matter.

The evaluation of citizenship within the European Union integration context shall be performed by resorting to several aspects that shall be tackled in the following chapters.

The first chapter shall perform an analysis of European Union integration drawing on the pros and cons of integration as well as a brief presentation of the history of integration and the mechanisms that need to be complied with in order for countries to accede.

The second chapter analyses the concept of citizenship and its impact on work migration within the European Union, both from the perspective of international law as well as that of European law. On a European level there is also the concept of “European citizenship”, which shall be discussed here in detail.

Finally, the third chapter shall comprise a case study referring to the manner in which media reflects the issue of citizenship within the EU. In this regard, the author shall resort to the presentation of a few commercials on the rights of Romanian consumers as European citizens, as well as an analysis of the British media campaign concerning the possibility given, since the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2014 for Romanian and Bulgarian citizens to seek jobs in the United Kingdom. This campaign was launched by politicians, but has received no support from the media, as several important British journals and newspapers have been highly supportive of the Romanians and Bulgarians in their quest for jobs.

## **Chapter 1 European Union Integration Process**

This chapter shall perform a brief analysis of the pros and cons of European integration, as well as a short presentation of the main aspects of the history of integration – both appearing extremely appealing to the countries aspiring to a position within the European Union conglomerate.

### **1.1. The pros and cons of integration**

Being a member of the European Union entails a series of advantages for the countries seeking accession, advantages that could not be fully enjoyed while being aside the European conglomerate.

Firstly, the European Union brings along economic benefits, one of them being the establishment of the euro, as a currency aspiring to being the unique currency of the European Union. The euro has been established throughout the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993. Even though the aim at the time was to replace all eleven national currencies (at the time, the European Union had only 13 members) by the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1999, this caveat proved impossible in such a short time. In order to be able to accede to this unique currency, countries had to prove that their economies were robust and stable, with a balanced budget and the stability of prices<sup>1</sup>. The adherence to the euro would “force” countries, before its introduction to the respective national economies (on a case by case situation), to reevaluate their economies and take the necessary steps to comply with the conditions set). Thus, today, 17 countries of the European Union use the euro as currency. However, the presence of the euro has forced, in some cases, acceleration of the economic measures which proved a wrong approach during the economic crisis. A good example in this regard is the

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Zorgbibe, *Construcția europeană. Trecut, prezent, viitor*, București: Ed. Trei, 1998, p. 354.

situation in Greece<sup>2</sup> – Greece’s economic development was somehow accelerated so that the country could adhere to the Eurozone in 2000. The country was not prepared at the time to embrace the euro, but was forced to do it since its position in the Mediterranean was highly important to the EU. The economic crisis of 2008 hit Greece to the full, as at the time Greece had a severe debt problem that exploded later during the crisis. The same situation happened in other European countries that had been severely affected by the economic crisis, such as Ireland, Spain and Portugal.

Secondly, there are the four freedoms which are a specific of the European Union and which are being implemented once a country adheres to the European Union: free movement of people, services, capital and merchandise. These freedoms are highly important, especially in regard to the present topic of research, since they provide people with the possibility to look for better education and jobs in other European countries, apart from their own, and to do it within the legal framework established by the European Union. This legal framework consists of the Union’s Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, as was established by the Lisbon Treaty<sup>3</sup>. However, this framework entails limitations on the freedom of movement, especially for Romania and Bulgaria, countries which need to comply with the Schengen evaluation process<sup>4</sup> in order to have their border controls removed. Until now, both Romania and Bulgaria have been outside the Schengen area, which means that their nationals’ freedom of movement is somehow restricted by border control.

In the case of Romania and Bulgaria, their accession treaties signed in April 2005 provided for a “transition period of seven years” before allowing Romanians and Bulgarians the freedom of movement within the European Labor Market. Back in 2005, this “transition period” was considered as necessary to calm the tensions within Europe regarding the possible massive migration of Romanians and Bulgarians towards Western countries in their search for jobs<sup>5</sup>. However, many countries have lifted these restrictions before the end of this seven-year period of time, with the exception of the United Kingdom, which only reluctantly lifted them on the 1st of January 2014. Similar restrictions have been put in place for the Croatian workers until the 30th of May 2020, from all European Union member countries, as Croatia has only recently become a member state of the European Union.

Thirdly, there are also the unanimous security, defense and foreign policies of the European Union, expressed through the establishment of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, along with the European External Action Service, which altogether perform duties similar to those of the national Ministries of Foreign Affairs. In the security and defense department, the Lisbon Treaty contributed actively to the strengthening of the Common Foreign and Security Policy<sup>6</sup> and the extension of the

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<sup>2</sup> Sara F. Taylor, *Financial Crisis in the European Union: The Cases of Greece and Ireland* 2011, pp. 8-9, [[http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-09202011\\_160932/unrestricted/Taylor\\_SF\\_2\\_011.pdf](http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-09202011_160932/unrestricted/Taylor_SF_2_011.pdf) ], accessed May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014.

<sup>3</sup>Jean-Claude Piris, *The Lisbon Treaty. A Legal and Political Analysis*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 167-204.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 173.

<sup>5</sup>László Andor, European Commissioner for Employment, *End of restrictions on free movement of workers from Bulgaria and Romania* Social Affairs and Inclusion European Commission - MEMO/14/1, 01/01/2014, [[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-14-1\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-1_en.htm)], accessed May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

<sup>6</sup>Piris, *op.cit.*, pp. 243-256.

attributions of the EUROPOL and EUROJUST<sup>7</sup>. This mélange of economic and security benefits explains the eagerness manifested by countries to accede to the European Union, such as Turkey, which has signed its association agreement in the 1960s and is still struggling to integrate, despite the many issues that the European Union is still raising regarding its tackling of the Kurdish matter, the Armenian Genocide, the religion etc.

However, there are also some drawbacks that countries experience when adhering to the European Union. The forcing of some economies to comply with European regulations has led some countries directly into the economic crisis. A good example is Greece, which had its economy massively forced to comply with the euro requirements and is now experiencing massive national poverty and protests.

Another difficult aspect for countries intent on accession is the need to comply with European Union regulations on various aspects, such as agriculture, fishing, and telecommunications. The European Union law comprises two types of documents – the mandatory ones, which need to be integrated as such into domestic law (regulations, directives and decisions) and the non-mandatory ones, which have a more advisory character (resolutions and recommendations). As far as the mandatory documents are concerned, any of these documents issued on one of the 31 topics which make the chapters of the *acquis communautaire*, needs to be accurately implemented in the national legislation, replacing the previous practices of countries on the matter.

In addition to that, there is also the sovereignty debate arising in many European countries from the need to comply with European Union regulations and to align the national legislation to the EU norms. Full compliance with European Union norms comes within the framework of the subsidiarity principle which means that the European Union can take some of the responsibilities from states and perform them better. In the face of the fear expressed by member states that this is an infringement on their sovereignty<sup>8</sup>, the European authorities replied that this principle is intended to complement the member countries' actions on one matter or another and should only replace the country's attributes where necessary. This replacement is intended to occur only when the respective country cannot act successfully on a matter, while the European Union as a whole can do it properly. Therefore, subsidiarity does not entail a suppression of the countries' competences on the respective issue<sup>9</sup>.

Moreover, there is also the need of member states to engage actively in all European endeavors, EUROPOL and Defense policies included, which could mean severe economic efforts for the respective countries<sup>10</sup>.

Taking everything into consideration it appears that countries wishing to adhere to the European Union experience both the advantages and disadvantages that membership entails. However, the benefits outnumber the drawbacks and this is reflected in the many efforts made by countries such as Turkey or the countries of the Southern Caucasus to join the European Union.

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<sup>7</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 182-183.

<sup>8</sup> Augustin Fuerea, *Instituțiile Uniunii Europene*, București: Universul Juridic, 2002, pp. 50-57.

<sup>9</sup> Michel Belanger, J.C. Gautron, L. Gard, *Droit de la Communauté et de l'Union Européennes*, Paris : L.G.D.J., 2001, pp. 65- 66.

<sup>10</sup> Piris, *op.cit.*, pp. 268-273.

## 1.2. Short history of the integration process and its criteria

The history of integration began in the 1950s, when, in 1951 the European Community of Coal and Steel was created, followed by two other in 1957 – the European Economic Community and the EURATOM. These three communities had six member states: France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. Seeing the high degree of integration these communities experienced, other countries expressed their interest in joining. Thus, in 1973, Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom joined the communities, followed by Greece in 1981 and Spain and Portugal in 1986. In 1993, the Maastricht Treaty, which is a landmark in the history of European integration, transformed the European Communities into the European Union and also established the criteria that needed to be respected for countries to join the European Union. Consequently, in 1995, Austria, Finland and Sweden joined, and a major wave of integration occurred in 2004, when 10 countries adhered: Slovakia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, the three Baltic countries, Cyprus and Malta. The last countries to adhere were Romania and Bulgaria in the 2007 wave and then Croatia in 2013.

According to the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty, “any European state respecting the fundamental principles of the Union (freedom, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms) can apply for accession to the EU”<sup>11</sup>. The European Council of Copenhagen<sup>12</sup>, between 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> of June 1993, established that a country can adhere to the European Union only after having successfully completed the economic and political conditions imposed by the accession process.

Here is a presentation of these conditions. The first refers to geographic compliance: the states wishing to become an EU member need to belong geographically, economically and culturally to the European continent. The second criterion is a political one and refers to the fact that the candidate state needs to be democratically developed, politically stable, and has to have positive practices in the field of rule of law, human rights and minority rights’ protection as well as no death penalty. The third criterion refers to economic matters: the need of a viable market economy, where competition is stimulated and manifests freely. A fourth criterion has been later added and refers to the need for the candidate country to adopt the community *acquis* – or the *acquis communautaire*. The implementation of this *acquis* is to take place on all levels of state administration. The *acquis communautaire* refers to all the provisions of the constitutive treaties, as well as the agreements that have changed these treaties, the treaties acknowledging the enlargement of the Union with new member states, the regulations, decisions and directives issued by the EU institutions. Adding to that are also statements, resolutions, joint position papers, multilateral conventions and treaties the European Union entered into. Even the case law of the European Union Court of Justice is considered to be part of the *acquis communautaire*<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup>Maastricht Treaty 1993, [<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/dat/11992M/htm/11992M.html#0001000001>], accessed May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014.

<sup>12</sup>Vasile Vese, Adrian Ivan, *Istoria integrării europene*, Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2001, p. 35.

<sup>13</sup>Vendelin Francisc Glazer, “Dezvoltarea instituțională a Uniunii Europene – Tratatul de la Maastricht” in *Revista de Administrație Publică și Politici Sociale*, Anul 1, Nr. 3, Iunie 2010, p. 63.

After complying with these criteria, the European Union shall open the negotiation process, consisting of the 31 chapters of the *acquis communautaire*, which need to be fulfilled completely by the official date of the accession. Among these chapters one can find the four freedoms, agriculture, fishing, transportation, taxation, workforce, energy, etc. Despite the many drawbacks in the compliance process, acceding states need to fully comply with these norms and agree to integrate them in the domestic legislation on the matter.

Even though the Lisbon Treaty of 2009 was intended to modify the provisions of the already existing treaties of the European Union, the integration criteria presented above have remained in place.

## **Chapter 2. Citizenship and work migration**

### **2.1. Legal aspects of citizenship**

From a legal point of view, citizenship can be defined as a permanent legal and political connection between a person and the state he/she belongs to<sup>14</sup>. This connection is translated into a series of rights and responsibilities assumed by both parties and is maintained even if the citizen leaves the state, unless he/she renounces it or it is withdrawn by the state. Citizenship can be achieved by being born on the territory which provides the citizenship (*ius soli*) or can be derived from the citizenship of the parents, no matter the place of birth (*ius sanguinis*). Another means of achieving the citizenship of a country is through naturalization (provided the respective person is willing to obtain it and the fulfilling of all the conditions established by the states in this regard). Naturalization can occur through: marriage, residency on the state's territory, adoption, reintegration, transfer or mere granting from the state.

The International Court of Justice defined citizenship as “a legal connection based on a social fact, on a sort of connection, on an effective solidarity of existence, interests, feelings, along with a reciprocity of rights and obligations”<sup>15</sup>. In light of this definition, citizenship falls within the domain of domestic law, which means, that by virtue of its sovereignty, each state can determine the criteria and means of achieving/losing the state's citizenship, as well as the rights and obligations deriving from this citizenship. States establish their own criteria regarding the obtaining of citizenship, and based on the extent in which these criteria are fulfilled by those seeking citizenship, state authorities decide whether to grant or not citizenship to the applicants.

### **2.2. European Union citizenship**

As the European Union is constantly developing and enlarging, the concept of “European citizenship” became very visible. However, European Union citizenship needs to be seen as complementary to the national citizenship and not as a substitute. This type of citizenship is more likely a concept to complete the European Union symbolic image along with the anthem and the flag.

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<sup>14</sup>Malcolm Shaw, *Public International Law*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 542.

<sup>15</sup>*The Nottebohm Case, ICJ Reports*, United Nations, 1955, p. 23.

European Union citizenship was firstly regulated in the Maastricht Treaty, the Second Part, articles 17-22. This part refers to the establishment of such a citizenship, and the quality of European citizen can be bestowed upon any person being a citizen of an EU member state.

The European Union citizenship is not a substitute<sup>16</sup> for the national citizenship, and should be considered as a continuation of the former. The role of the European citizenship is to allow its bearer to be able to exercise his/her rights both in the state he/she belongs to through the citizenship connection, but also in another state of the European Union. Thus, two major elements of the obtaining and usage of the European citizenship need to be kept in mind: it can be obtained only by a person who is already a citizen of an EU member state and it is only an addition to the national citizenship.

There is also a statement annexed to the Maastricht Treaty, which specifies that “citizenship of a member state shall only be determined by reference to the respective member state’s domestic legislation”<sup>17</sup>. It is thus upon the states’ discretion, and based on their domestic law, to specify who can become a citizen.

In addition to this, the European citizenship is based on the common principles of the member states: freedom, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, rule of law, and derives itself from the basic human rights as regulated by the European Convention of Human Rights and the Declaration of Human Rights.

European citizenship, as a complement to national citizenship and based on the provisions regulated by national and international law in the field, offers the owner a series of rights. These rights have firstly been included in the Maastricht Treaty of 1993 and shall be presented below in full detail:

- the right of citizens to move and settle on the territory of any member state of the European Union (art.18);
- the right of any citizen of the European Union, residing in a member state, without being a citizen of the respective state, to vote and also run in the local elections of the respective state, in the same conditions as the citizens of the respective state (art.19);
- European Union citizens have the right to benefit from diplomatic protection within the territory of any of the European Union member states, should his state of citizenship not be represented there throughout an embassy or a consulate. The conditions regulating protection are the same as the ones regarding the citizens of the respective state (art.21);
- the right of an European citizen to send petitions to the European Parliament (art.21);
- the right to address the European Ombudsman for the examination of a case concerning the faulty administration of a situation by one of the institutions/organisms of the European Union (art.21)<sup>18</sup>;

The Amsterdam Treaty of 1999 added several other rights to the European citizenship:

- the right to address in writing to any community institution/organism in one of the Union’s official languages and receive an answer in the same language;

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<sup>16</sup>Ioana Militaru, “Cetățenia Uniunii Europene potrivit Tratatului de la Lisabona” in *Juridical Tribune*, Volume 1, Issue 1, June 2011, p. 60.

<sup>17</sup>*Maastricht Treaty, op.cit.*

<sup>18</sup>*Ibidem.*

- the right of access to all the documents issued by the European Parliament, the European Council and Commission, provided certain conditions are fulfilled;
- the right to non-discrimination based on nationality, sex, disabilities, age or sexual orientation, for the Union citizens;
- the right of equal access to the community public positions.<sup>19</sup>

The European Commission is in charge with supervising the manner in which states comply with the provisions of the treaties and elaborates regular reports on the progress achieved in this regard and the difficulties met in the implementation of the respective provisions.

The need for citizens to be constantly informed has been considered a priority by the European Commission which launched in 1998 the “Europe Direct”<sup>20</sup> information system. The aim of the system is to provide citizens with information on the possibilities and rights conferred to them by the European citizenship. The service is provided in all the official languages of the European Union, is free of charge and can be accessed through regular phone or email from any part of the European Union territory.

A highly important aspect regarding the European citizenship is the introduction of the “citizens’ initiative” by the Lisbon Treaty<sup>21</sup>. Its aim is to allow European Union citizens to influence the decision-making process, by drawing the text of a “citizens’ initiative”, which should be signed by “not less than one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of Member States”<sup>22</sup>. This initiative shall address the Commission to submit proposals on matters which these citizens consider essential to the European Union and thus should be regulated by legal texts. This initiative is a symbolic example of the power citizens can have on a European Union level, as the Commission cannot be obliged to take the suggestions into account. Moreover, the legal framework<sup>23</sup> in which this “Citizens’ Initiative” functions has been established keeping in mind the need of achieving a transparent and correct manner of information and communication between citizens, governments, and European Union institutions. At present, the Citizens’ Initiative has become functional and operates in the following manner: the document needs the support of a million citizens from 7 member states. Each member state has a minimum number of signatories that needs to be accomplished before submitting the document. The minimum number of signatories can be found in the Official Record<sup>24</sup>. Currently, 8 initiatives are being discussed within the European Commission<sup>25</sup>.

Given the fact that the European citizenship is a rather conceptual one, than an immediately effective one, it is difficult to find any drawbacks to its existence. However, one

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<sup>19</sup>*Cetățenia Europeană, Teme Europene*, Info Europa, No. 9, August 2007, [[http://ec.europa.eu/romania/documents/eu\\_romania/tema\\_9.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/romania/documents/eu_romania/tema_9.pdf)], accessed May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014.

<sup>20</sup>*Europe Direct*, [[http://europa.eu/europedirect/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm)], accessed May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2014.

<sup>21</sup>*Lisbon Treaty*, 2009, Art 11 (4), [<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=OJ:C:2007:306:TOC>], accessed May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibidem*.

<sup>23</sup>Piris, *op.cit.*, pp. 133-141.

<sup>24</sup>*The Citizens’ Initiative* [<http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/signatories>], accessed May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014.

<sup>25</sup>*The Citizen’s Initiative*, [<http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/ongoing>], accessed May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014.

drawback that the author identified is the lack of sufficient knowledge regarding it and its benefits, adding to the lack of knowledge of citizens on the regular aspects of their citizenship. It has come to our attention, especially while documenting the case studies, that citizenship is still being approached from the point of view of the national citizenship and restrained to it. A good example in this regard is the manner in which the British MP Nigel Farage managed to use this concept and apply it at his own will to a situation, in order to spin it in favor of his party's position.

Regrettably, this lack of knowledge on the rights and benefits that both concepts – “citizenship” and “European citizenship” entail has not been addressed thoroughly by the media, despite the fact that a clarification from this branch would have been rather useful and wide-reaching. As shall be seen in the case studies, the discriminatory position taken towards the Romanians and Bulgarians by the British MP Farage has not been cleared by the media by approaching the citizenship issue, which was in fact the subject of the dispute, but rather the economic and social aspects pertaining to these countries.

### **2.3. The impact of citizenship on work migration within the European Union**

An important element of European Union policy is the freedom of movement of its citizens within the wider borders of the Union for various purposes, work and education being among the most common ones. However, the recent lifting of work restrictions for Romanians and Bulgarians has led to a vivid media campaign designed by British politicians who intended to show that the lifting of these restrictions will only have negative impact on the European Union as a whole, since workers from these countries will go to the United Kingdom seeking for jobs or even less respectful occupations – stealing, engaging in human trafficking, etc.

Leaving aside the discrimination against the Romanian and Bulgarian citizens, as well as the lack of statistical support of such accusations, the campaign launched by the politicians trespasses on several aspects: the right of free movement of these citizens, the right to seek employment in other European Union member states, as regulated by a series of documents that shall be presented further on in this chapter, and the principle of non-discrimination based on citizenship, to name but a few.

Generally, at the European Union level, migration was considered rather a problem than an opportunity, although several documents, such as the Action Plan for the EU Health Workforce<sup>26</sup> or the EASI – the New Global Programme of the European Union to support workforce and social policy<sup>27</sup> have shown that Europe needs more work force, especially in the field of health care, public administration and judiciary offices.

However, the impact of migration goes beyond the fulfilling of work-necessity. René Girault<sup>28</sup> has underlined that migrants need to be considered in the wider perspective of

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<sup>26</sup>Commission Staff Working Document on an Action Plan for the EU Health Workforce, Strasbourg, 18.04.2012, [[http://ec.europa.eu/health/workforce/docs/staff\\_working\\_doc\\_healthcare\\_work\\_force\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/workforce/docs/staff_working_doc_healthcare_work_force_en.pdf)], accessed May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

<sup>27</sup>EASI, Noul Program Global al UE pentru Ocuparea Forței de Muncă și Politică Socială, November 2013 [<http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>], accessed May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014.

<sup>28</sup>René Girault (ed.), *Identitate și conștiință europeană în secolul XX*, București: Curtea Veche, 2004, pp. 47-67.

forming an European identity that would comprise several dimensions – cultural, social, economic, an identity transcending borders and that helps create unity among the people of the European Union, as well as among those aspiring to become its citizens, as is the case of the people from candidate or prospective candidate countries, such as Turkey, Ukraine, the Southern Caucasus countries.

Internal migration within the European Union has become a fundamental right of its citizens, after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and the enlargement of the institutional provisions concerning internal migration<sup>29</sup>.

In addition to this, one needs to take into account the "circular migration"<sup>30</sup> phenomenon, which is strongly supported by the International Migration Organization, encouraging migration between home and the workplace. This would help reduce the gaps in workforce in certain fields of activity, and would contribute to the reduction in social-security fears experienced by the citizens of the country accommodating migrants, as the latter would eventually return home, bringing money, ideas and personal abilities. This is especially important since the European Union is in need of qualified work force. Such an attempt to attract qualified work force was the "Blue Card"<sup>31</sup>, which granted residence rights for two years in any of the European Union states which received the worker, provided he received three times the minimum wage he would have gained in his/her country, for at least a year. Several countries – United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark opted-out of the provisions of the Blue Card.

In this regard, the Stockholm Programme<sup>32</sup> was intended to ensure an open Europe both to its internal migrants as well as to those coming from third countries, which would be able to devise policies that would respond both to the priorities as well as requirements of EU member states. The priorities set by this programme are very comprehensive ones, dealing with migration from multiple perspectives: promoting the rights citizens have and the need of their awareness in this regard, in order to foster a better life, citizen protection, providing solidarity and partnership when dealing with issues such as migration and asylum, especially in the wider framework of the area of freedom, security and justice.

Migration is a very sensitive matter, especially when considered in conjunction with refugee and asylum requests. As a result, the European Commission contributed to the creation of the European Migration Network<sup>33</sup>, which intends to create a unique model of EU immigration patterns, similar to the European Union citizenship. According to this network, immigration needs to be seen in economic and holistic terms, the latter implying that these

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<sup>29</sup> According to the Lisbon Treaty, internal workforce migration issues should be settled by qualified majority vote within the European Parliament as a co-legislator, along with the European Commission; moreover, the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice has been extended to revise and interpret legislation regarding this matter.

<sup>30</sup> Hugo Brady, *EU Migration Policy. An A to Z*, Center for European Reform, February 2008.

<sup>31</sup> *Blue Card*, [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/internal\\_market/living\\_and\\_working\\_in\\_the\\_internal\\_market/114573\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/internal_market/living_and_working_in_the_internal_market/114573_en.htm), accessed May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014.

<sup>32</sup> It was adopted by the European Council in Brussels in December 2009 – it replaces the Tampere and Hague Programmes, and refers to the changes needed to be implemented in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice and extends (for almost 5 years) – 2010-2014; the Programme is currently ongoing.

<sup>33</sup> *The European Migration Network* [[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european\\_migration\\_network/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/index_en.htm)], accessed May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

migrants need to be seen as residents and future citizens. Should they be considered “trouble-makers” this will prevent them from being assimilated and will negatively impact the whole “European mobility” concept<sup>34</sup>. One also needs to consider the benefits these migrants bring along: national economic growth, productivity momentum, a positive example of the European Labor Market safety, as well as the fact that these workers “pay more in taxes than they receive from the social security services”<sup>35</sup>.

Consequently, in the Romanian and Bulgarian case, the correlation between work-migration and citizenship has proved to be an instrument of discrimination, as shown in the media. This aspect shall be presented in detail in one of the case studies of the third part of this article.

### Chapter 3. Case study

The media has a great role in tackling the citizenship and work migration issues in the European Union integration context. The media has both the power to “spread the word” on the implementation of one policy or another, as well as influence its implementation, as it consists of all the public channels that can be used in order to inform the public – TV channels, official web stream (as is the case of the European Union Parliament debates), blogs, newspapers etc. A good example of the manner in which the media influenced the citizenship matter was the British campaign launched by MP Nigel Farage, stating that Romanians and Bulgarians, who were “living like animals”, were eager for the 1st of January 2014 to come, so that all work bans imposed on them be lifted and thus be able to invade the civilized world, namely the United Kingdom.

Therefore, the present case study shall refer mostly to the impact that media had on the accurate approach of the two pressing issues discussed above – citizenship and work migration in the European Union.

The case study is in fact two-folded: one part shall deal with an analysis of how media contributes to advertising the rights of European citizens through a series of commercials, while the second part shall analyze the media campaign concerning the possibility of Romanian and Bulgarian workers to apply for jobs in the United Kingdom. As far as the latter is concerned, the author shall present the accusations brought by Nigel Farage to these workers (both Romanian and Bulgarian workers) and the positive impact of the British media campaign that followed, highlighting the faults of these accusations and the beneficial impact that these specific workers might have on the British working environment.

The first part of the case study is composed of several commercials produced within the European Consumer Campaign<sup>36</sup> ([www.consumatoruleuropean.ro](http://www.consumatoruleuropean.ro)) featuring an unsatisfied customer in a series of situations such as: buying a laptop that does not work<sup>37</sup>,

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<sup>34</sup> Sergio Carrera, Anais Faure Atger, Elspeth Guild and Dora Kostakopoulou, “Labour Immigration Policy in the EU: a Renewed Agenda for Europa 2020” in *CEPS Policy Brief*, No. 240, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

<sup>35</sup> Carrera, *op. cit.*

<sup>36</sup> *European Consumer Campaign*, [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EpVjZssndw>], accessed May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014.

<sup>37</sup> *Consumatorul European: Laptopul* [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7Oe-dQD9rQ>], accessed May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014.

buying a dress for his wife<sup>38</sup> and then wanting to return it, as well as complaining about the facilities in a hotel<sup>39</sup> he and his wife booked and which do not correspond with the leaflet advertisement. In all situations the customer's complaint is poorly addressed by the seller/provider of service, in a quite disrespectful manner even – for instance, in the case when the husband bought a dress for his wife and he wanted to return it, the reply he got from the seller was “Why, it doesn't fit you?”. Such behavior triggers the invoking of European rights in all three commercials – thus, the disgruntled customer addressed the seller with the following line: “Do you know who I am? I am an European citizen and I have rights!”

The rule in such situations would be to claim that one is a customer having rights that need to be respected and addressed appropriately. However, in this case the emphasis is laid on the quality of being a European citizen, which doubles the rights of the consumer. In this regard, the aim of the commercial is to highlight the fact that consumer rights should be respected firstly for their quality of being consumer rights and secondly for being European rights that all European citizens are entitled to. National citizenship is not mentioned at all in these commercials and the fact that the actor brings into discussion the rights he would normally have as a regular consumer and national citizen - in these cases they are presented under the protective umbrella of the “European citizenship” – leads one to believe that these two concepts overlap rather than complement each other in this particular case.

The second part of the case study that shall be presented in this paper is a more complex one and rather explicit on the impact that media channels can have on a campaign targeting mere citizenship. In the imminence of the United Kingdom lifting working restrictions for Romanians and Bulgarians beginning with the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2014, Nigel Farage, an UKIP (United Kingdom Independence Party – a right wing populist party) Member of Parliament launched a verbally violent attack against the Romanians and Bulgarians accusing them of living like animals and being interested in “invading Britain”, which was a “civilized country”<sup>40</sup>, with the intention of spreading their bad ways by enlarging the “Romanian crime wave” already existing in London. However, Farage's discriminatory speech (which might be even considered hate speech to some extent), stems from a wrong view of the issue: he claims to have visited a Roma camp outside Sofia and been appalled by the improper living conditions there; his entire speech is based on this little “field trip”, which is not conclusive on the matter.

It is here that the author considers that an explanation needs to be given. To begin with, Roma is not the same as Romanian. Romanians are citizens of Romania, while Roma people are an ethnic minority, which, based on its whereabouts and its conduct may receive at a time the citizenship of the respective country or not (provided they fulfill the requirements for obtaining citizenship, set by the authorities). Even though there may be Roma people of Romanian origin (born and raised in Romania), they are not the representative population of Romania. Secondly, even if Romania is not among the top five countries of the European

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<sup>38</sup> *Consumatorul European: Rochia* [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ik-MBqJCSm>], accessed May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014.

<sup>39</sup> *Consumatorul European: Hotelul* [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJ6k9oG0xjM>], accessed May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014.

<sup>40</sup> Nigel Farage, *Romanians want to move to a civilized country*, September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013 [<http://www.politics.co.uk/news/2013/09/06/nigel-farage-romanians-want-to-move-to-a-civilised-country>], accessed May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014.

Union regarding the living conditions and rather at the bottom of the ranking<sup>41</sup> as shown in a communique issued by the Romanian European Institute in February 2014, like the population of any other member country of the European Union, Romanians live mostly in cities, towns and villages, enjoy good sanitation, running water, heating and electricity and any criminal conduct is rapidly and severely sanctioned by law<sup>42</sup>.

The British media took on these statements and drew a very strong defense of Romania. The Economist was one of the leading media channels that approached this matter in particular. In an article entitled “What Britain forgets: Romania is booming”<sup>43</sup>, dating back to December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013, the author points out that in spite of the desperation shown by the tabloids and the politicians (Prime-minister David Cameron and Home Secretary Theresa May, to name a few),—the economic situation in Romania is not so difficult in order to justify a massive exodus of the Romanian population to the United Kingdom, as was suggested by Nigel Farage in his statements previously referred to: “Unemployment there is relatively low (and lower than in Britain). Its budget deficit puts Britain to shame. The government is in the midst of liberalizing the economy, opening up new sectors (most notably, energy and telecoms) to competition and investment. Economic growth is at 4.1%. Wages are rising fast. Adjusting for prices, Bucharest’s GDP per capita is above the EU average. Indeed, the average Bucharest resident is comfortably better off than the average resident of Manchester”<sup>44</sup>. The same article also draws on an extract from the Romanian “Ziarul Financiar”, claiming that two Romanian companies – A& D Pharma and ROMGAZ have recently listed in London, generating millions in fees from resorting to London’s-based banks, lawyers and consultants<sup>45</sup>. With such a lucrative economy, a massive migration to Britain is not justified.

In addition to this, another article published in the same journal four days later, on December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013, is in fact an open letter to the citizens of Romania and Bulgaria, inviting them to come to the United Kingdom to work, in light of the fact that years ago, it was the United Kingdom which militated in favor of the accession to the European Union of these countries – “Although our leaders seem to have forgotten, Britain pushed for your country to join the EU, knowing that you would one day turn up on our doorstep”<sup>46</sup>. This article takes on the job of clarifying some pressing issues that have been wrongly presented by the British politicians (Farage, Cameron, May). Firstly, these work immigrants will be a blessing to the economy – “[...]because they contribute more to the Treasury in taxes than they take out in benefits and services – about 35% more, according to a plausible estimate –

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<sup>41</sup>*IER: România, pe ultimul loc în UE în privința standardului de viață; riscul sărăciei a ajuns la 41%*, Agerpress, 28 februarie 2014 [<http://www.agerpres.ro/social/2014/02/28/ier-romania-pe-ultimul-loc-in-ue-in-privinta-standardului-de-viata-riscul-saraciei-a-ajuns-la-41-11-43-30>], accessed May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014.

<sup>42</sup> For further statistics, one may find useful the website of the National Statistics Institute, <http://www.insse.ro/cms/>.

<sup>43</sup>“What Britain Forgets” in *The Economist*, December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013 [<http://www.economist.com/blogs/blighty/2013/12/what-britain-forgets>], accessed May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibidem*.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibidem*.

<sup>46</sup>“You’re welcome! An open letter to the citizens of Romania and Bulgaria” in *The Economist*, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013 [ <http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21591865-open-letter-citizens-bulgaria-and-romania-youre-welcome>], accessed May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014.

they save our schools and hospitals from deeper cuts.[...] They make our economy bigger, lowering our debt-to-GDP ratio”<sup>47</sup>. Secondly, even if some of these migrants are bound to turn into villains once entering the country, the majority will not, which should be a pleasant finding by comparison – “Those of you who end up begging or stealing – and there will inevitably be some – will be featured on the front pages of our newspapers [...] People will be nicely surprised when the great majority of you come to work rather than scourge off the street”<sup>48</sup>.

A third article published in *The Economist* and worth mentioning is the one of January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2014 addressing the results of the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism in both Romania and Bulgaria – “Depressing reading”<sup>49</sup>. Although the substance of the article addresses the political instability in Bulgaria, the Romanian situation is presented as improved, at least by comparison- the country’s government enjoyed a 2/3 parliamentary majority, a 4,1% GDP growth in the third quarter of the previous year and implemented legislative measures. However, a major source of discontent in the Romanian case was the reported lack of transparency in the amending of the new Romanian criminal code in December 2013, along with the accusations formulated by Transparency International claiming that the process of fighting corruption was “slow and insufficient”<sup>50</sup>.

Another noteworthy pro-Romanian stance has been taken by Prince Charles himself. After the campaign launched by Farage against the Romanians and Bulgarians, the *Daily Mail* featured in March 2014 an article<sup>51</sup> about the love manifested by His Royal Highness Prince Charles towards the beauties of Transylvanian wildlife. Prince Charles visited Romania for the first time in 1998, and ever since bought two properties in Transylvania and comes back to the country at least once a year. The Prince works closely with the European Nature Trust in order to help preserve the Romanian natural flora and fauna, constantly marveling at the natural riches of the country – “<It’s the last corner of Europe where you see true sustainability and complete resilience> says the Prince. <There’s so much we can learn from it before it’s too late>”<sup>52</sup>.

Finally, a last media piece that shall be analyzed in the present article refers to the British citizens who chose to move to Romania, showing thus that the country is not as dangerous or backwards as the British politicians intended to present it. It is a fact that the “undercover” campaign performed by Prince Charles, through the promotion of Romanian scenery and wildlife, many British have felt the incentive to explore the Romanian landscapes on their own. Many even chose to stay here, build houses, bring their families and begin a Romanian life, enjoying the beauty of the countryside and giving back something to the very hospitable rural inhabitants.

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<sup>47</sup>*Ibidem.*

<sup>48</sup>*Ibidem.*

<sup>49</sup>“Romania and Bulgaria: Depressing reading”in *The Economist*, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2014, [<http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2014/01/romania-and-bulgaria> ], accessed May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibidem.*

<sup>51</sup>Clive Aslet, “Romanians? They can teach us a thing or two, says Prince Charles” in *Daily Mail*, March 28th, 2014 [ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2590673/Romanians-They-teach-thing-two-says-Prince-Charles.html> ], accessed May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibidem.*

One such example is that of Roger Quentin, who moved from London years ago to a small village in the Sebeş Mountains. His story is a particular one: he worked as a telegrapher in the British Army and was so impressed by the bloody Romanian revolution of 1989 that began a campaign of raising goods and money, which he brought through a convoy to Romania. He came back several times to Romania, bringing goods (clothes, shoes, food etc.) and in one of his trips he arrived in Loman and fell in love with the village, especially with a specific place on top of the hill, where he decided to settle, build a house and a small inn. While his family is back in England and visits often, he became so attached to the place that he hardly leaves. In the meantime, he engaged in agricultural activities and also teaches English to the villagers' children, for free. Quentin is aware of the negative image painted of Romania by the British politicians – “It bothers me that back home, in England, should you ask the British something about Romania, they will only tell you about gypsies, abandoned children, and Dracula. I tell them that Romanians are intelligent and hospitable and that Romania is the jewel of Europe”<sup>53</sup>.

Altogether, it seems that the media has had a positive impact on the assessment of disputes related to the European citizenship. The above case studies have been chosen for two main reasons: firstly, to point out the complementary aspect of the European citizenship (which is to be added to the national one bearing the same rights and obligations – in the case of the European citizenship, the latter are to become effective especially on a European level,) and secondly, to highlight the fact that citizenship disputes arise mainly out of extremism and ignorance of the realities of individual countries – therefore, the media, which is considered the “watchdog of democracy” has a long and difficult job to perform.

A striking fact is that despite the British press campaign attempting to establish the truth on whether these two countries are so destitute or not, the Romanian and Bulgarian politicians did not take any official position in order to defend their countries from the accusations put forward by Nigel Farage. Only recently did Hannes Swoboda, leader of the Social-Democrat group of the European Parliament take a stand against such accusations: “Romania and Bulgaria are EU member states, they enjoy full rights and thus they deserve everyone's respect and consideration, just like the other member states. Innuendos such as those recently launched by Mister Farage are racist, anti-European and deeply condemnable”<sup>54</sup>.

## Conclusions

The title of this article has been chosen as a metaphor of the strength that media exercises on setting the record straight especially with regard to concepts that are rather new and need further clarification in the eyes of the people, as well as in the situations in which state officials prefer a more humble approach and refuse to take a firm position against any wrongdoings that their countries' might be experiencing.

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<sup>53</sup>*Fairytale Romania: An Englishman turned into a Romanian peasant*, RTV, May 20th, 2012 [[http://www.romaniatv.net/romania-de-poveste-englezul-transformat-in-taran-roman\\_30034.html](http://www.romaniatv.net/romania-de-poveste-englezul-transformat-in-taran-roman_30034.html)], accessed May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014.

<sup>54</sup>Ştefan Ionescu, “Social-Democraţii apăra românii de atacurile lui Farage. Cam Singurii” in *Obiectiv Info*, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2014 [[http://www.obiectiv.info/social-democra-ii-apara-romanii-de-atacurile-lui-farage-cam-singurii\\_41364.html](http://www.obiectiv.info/social-democra-ii-apara-romanii-de-atacurile-lui-farage-cam-singurii_41364.html)], accessed May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

Throughout the article, the author has analyzed the manner in which the concepts of “European Union integration” and “European citizenship” have been approached both by citizens and authorities. In this regard, two case studies have been used. The results of this academic endeavor have shown that even though the media has had a strong stance by the spreading of knowledge regarding citizenship and highlighting any forms of wrong conduct in this regard from states and state officials, these efforts have been insufficient until present and the matter is in need of further strong tackling.

An element that needs further consideration is that of the “European citizenship”. One needs to remember that the European citizenship is complementary to the national one in the respect that rights and responsibilities are almost similar everywhere within the European Union and they need to be offered the same respect as on a domestic level. Nevertheless, states and especially non-governmental organizations need to address this issue from a more comprehensive manner, as all citizens must become aware of the rights and responsibilities that being both a citizen of a state, as well as a “European citizen” entail.

Moreover, in light of the second case study and the manner in which citizenship has been instrumented as a descriptive asset of an entire country, the author considers that citizenship should be restricted to being an identification notion for the person and not a quality/drawback that could impact its performance on the workforce market.

Given that the citizenship connection to the state of origin extends even outside its borders, these states have a primary duty to their citizens to protect them from any kind of discrimination and should take a stand when such an event occurs (as was the case with the Romanian and Bulgarian citizens). Additionally, the role of the media is crucial in raising awareness on the tackling of such issues – however, the media has always been submitted to a certain amount of bias, which means that the matter at heart is most unlikely to be fully transmitted to the public. It remains to the civil society to engage in an active campaign against discrimination based on citizenship on a European Union level.

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