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**Summary of the doctoral thesis**

**Current concepts concerning unity in  
diversity in the European Union**

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The questions about the nature and finality of the European integration are always of great interest. Since the beginning of the regional integration studies people have tried to determine the reasons for which sovereign states cooperate, who are the actors, processes, finality and limits of this cooperation, as well as the place of this cooperation in the international system.

If we were to discuss about the European project we can not ignore the way it evolved in the last 50 years. Through small steps, as the founding fathers suggested, the European Coal and Steel Community became The European Economic Community and then a Union. The changes did not relate only to the number of members, geographical coverage, objectives, institutional architecture or policy, but also to motivations and desires. Initially, the European leaders wished to transform the continent from one marked by violence and conflict into a continent characterized by peace and economic prosperity that could create a feeling of belonging among the European people. At present, people discover that economic integration or welfare are no longer enough in order to motivate the European citizens and to accomplish the European Union's project. Thus, either by underlining the importance of a political project and a Constitution, or of the discovery of "the European soul" and the creation of a European identity, the European leaders concluded that we need new solutions able to face the new challenges.

The process of understanding the disasters and suffering caused by conflict and division has to be completed by an understanding of our world, a world characterized by a double process of globalization and regionalization, of integration and differentiation, a world in which people feel that they belong to some transnational communities and want the benefits of the global economy, but in the same time they fear the loss of their collective identity and traditional values. Therefore, we might wonder about the attitude of the European citizens towards the globalization process. Would there be a unification process, in order to create a strong European identity, or rather a differentiation one that underlines the specificities of each community? Moreover, we need to understand both the success and failures of the European Union in order to see their impact and how they influenced the Union's development. One example could be that after the success of the enlargement rounds of 2004 and 2007 followed

the failure of the Constitutional Treaty ratification process and the problems related to the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. The European citizens were against a greater integration during a time when the political leaders, especially the Presidents of the European Commission (Jaques Santer, Romano Prodi or Jose Manuel Barosso) were talking about the creation of political Europe. This was possible because, in comparison with the first integration years, the decisions are no longer the result of the will of the political elites and of the silent consensus coming from the citizens, but of a participatory democracy in which citizens are important actors in the entire legislative process, being able to express their opinion through debates, petitions or referendums.

The institutional, legal, political, economic and social development of the European Community determined changes in the way it functions, the actors involved (national, regional, local, political parties, interest groups, citizens, etc.) and the policies promoted (purpose or the instruments used to reach the objectives). The policies were used to create solidarity and a European identity. But when the old integration motives (peace, external threats and economic growth) start to lose their efficiency one must find new energy sources. The purpose of economic unity has to be replaced by those of cultural and political unity. In order to accomplish this we need a new approach, one focused on the discovery of the European common heritage and diversity. We need to understand who we are in order to make future plans together.

The title “Present concepts concerning unity in diversity in the European Union” was motivated by the search process the European Union is experiencing, a search both for the common roots and the diversity elements that might help build a common future, as well as of the proper means for its accomplishment.

Recognizing the national, regional and local diversity from an economic, social and cultural point of view, as well as the citizens’ divergent opinions related to integration, the European leaders decided to consider diversity a democratic strength, an impulse for creativity and innovation and not a barrier to the consolidation of the European project. Thus, this thesis wants to study the new approaches related to unity and diversity put forward by the European Union. Starting from the hypothesis that the European integration can no longer be stimulated only by ideas used more than 50 years ago, this paper wants to reflect on the importance of the economic and cultural factors and the way they interrelate in fostering the feeling of belonging

and of a European identity. Thus, in the end, we present two of the Union's policies- the regional policy and the cultural policy.

In this respect, we are going to start by determining the concepts of European unity and diversity for us to see their characteristics, how they are perceived and how they influence the integration process. Then we are going to concentrate on the different European actors and their interactions, because they are the ones who promote and implement the European policies, they are the ones who can stimulate or slow down the integration. The next step is the analysis of the European integration theories and of the concepts of governance and identity, issues highly present in the European political discourse. Finally, we are going to concentrate on two of the European policies, one that focuses on the economic and social solidarity, on the wellbeing of the European citizens, and the other one on the richness of the common heritage, on the European soul.

The paper is made up of an introduction, four chapters, conclusions, appendix and bibliography.

The first chapter deals with the concepts of European unity and diversity, following each one's characteristic. After a presentation of the idea of unity on the European continent we see how the values, symbols, institutional framework and policies of the Union are the elements that at present create the unity feeling. As far as diversity is concerned, it can be found among the Member States and inside them – geographic, demographic, social, economic, political, cultural (ethnicity, language, history, religion) – and it is doubled by the citizens' diversity of opinions.

The second chapter analyzes the actors on the European political scene: institutions and other European Union's bodies, Member States, regional and local actors, political parties, civil society and media. The analysis' importance is related to the way in which each actor's interest, role and means of action changed in time in order to understand their present decisions and preferences.

The third chapter presents several European integration theories and concepts (federalism, functionalism, neo-functionalism, realism, neo-realism, intergovernmentalism, institutionalism, constructivism, etc.) that somehow influenced the unique nature of the European Union – something between a federation and an intergovernmental organization. Then we focus on two highly debated issues, those of governance and identity, in order to see

when and why the notion of European governance appeared (and those of good governance and multi-level governance) and how it evolved in relation to the European project; if the European Union needs an identity and if it does, what type of identity.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the Regional and Cultural Policies of the European Union. With the help of the official documents, analyses, studies and statistical data we would like to present the evolution, the present situation and the perspectives of the two policies.

We might think that this is a topic about which it has been written a lot and that there is nothing more to add. But on the other hand, we can not say that the European Union was created half a century ago and it remained the same. On the contrary, it witnessed a continuous process of enlargement and consolidation, had to face the external and internal challenges and to find new solutions in order to unite diversity. It is a process that did not end and that is why we should still pay attention to it. The present study is not an exhaustive one, knowing that there are also other aspects that could be analyzed. However, we proposed a new approach, namely a comparative study of two of the Union's policies, of the economic and cultural instruments, in the broader context of the European integration. The decision was motivated by the fact that the economic and regional policies, based on the idea of economic and social solidarity, are the best examples if we want to find some clear, tangible results of the European unification process. But, as Jacques Delors, former President of the European Commission, said "you can not fall in love with the common market" because these are things that touch the mind and not the soul of the Europeans. Thus, we can notice that lately the cultural policy gained importance. The discovery of the common cultural heritage, intercultural dialogue or ecumenism are the new instruments promoted by the European elites in order to reveal the European soul and to foster a stronger European identity, able to unite countries, regions and especially citizens.

## **Chapter 1: Determining the concepts of unity and diversity**

Unity and diversity are the two sides of the same coin and both have to be studied in order to understand the complexity of European identity. As Vaclav Havel said, "peace, partnership and cooperation are possible only among those who know who they are. Acknowledging your own identity is the fundamental condition for any good relation with someone else". As far as unity is concerned, there have been several unifications projects for

the European continent in order to insure peace and prosperity for the region. But only after the Second World War the foundation of this unique construction was laid, a construction that has been standing for more than 50 years and that has experienced a continuous process of enlargement and consolidation. Now we are witnessing a European Union with 27 Member States, with common treaties, institutions, policies, values and symbols.

The previous mentioned elements are the ones ensuring unity, but this does not mean that there are no debates concerning their significance or importance in the European process. Such an example is the debates on the European values, debates stimulated by the drafting of the Constitutional Treaty and the potential accession of Turkey, but also by the claim that for more and more Europeans the idea of “Europe as a heritage or as a mission” doesn’t signify much, the citizens having difficulties in seeing what is common to Europe and in feeling part of the whole. “The Working Group on the Spiritual and Cultural Dimensions of Europe” and the conference “What Values for Europe?”, that assembled intellectuals and representatives of Christianity, Judaism and Islam, had the mission to find the fundamentals of the European culture, the common spiritual, religious and cultural values. The result was that besides the universal values stated in the Union’s Treaties, they mentioned the complementarity of such values like faith, reason and critical thinking that define so well the European spirit and underlined the importance of positive understanding of religion’s role in the European integration process. On the other hand, it was stated that there is now fix European values list and even if there is a European cultural space, it can not and must not be clearly delimited. It is about a process, a future project, and we have to keep in mind that Europe’s cultural identity was modeled in the permanent confrontation with “the new, the different and the stranger” and its adaptability represents the main quality of Europe. Because we have mentioned the role of religion we can not ignore the divergent opinions and the debates at the European level that were caused by the proposal to introduce the notion of Christian religion in the Preamble of the Constitutional Treaty. In the end, the European leaders adopted in the Constitutional Treaty and then in the Lisbon Treaty a more neutral wording, which states that “the common values of the Member States” draw inspiration “from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, from which have developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person”. In the Preamble and in Article 1 these values are enumerated: “freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, human dignity”. Moreover, this

community is based on “the respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities” and it is characterized by “pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men”. Its purpose is to promote “peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples”, “economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity among Member States” (Art.2). Through these declarations it becomes a *community of values and a community of purpose*. In order to locate this notion of community it uses another important term - *area*. “The Union shall offer its citizens an area of freedom, security and justice without internal frontiers”. And as any other national state, in order to differentiate itself from other entities, The Union uses symbolic elements: the flag, the hymn, the EU day, the EURO coin, the motto “united in diversity”, the European citizenship and passport.

According to the same Treaty, these values are promoted by the institutional framework that has also other purposes, like the promotion of the Union’s objectives and interests, the interests of the citizens and of the Member States, as well as insuring the coherence, efficacy and continuity of the Union’s policies and actions. In this respect, the institutional framework is supported by the European political parties, which are considered to be an important European integration and conscience formation element. The picture wouldn’t be complete if we do not mention some of the Union’s policies (economic, agriculture, regional, social, environmental, consumers or media) that have been part of the integration process, a process of European unity building, but a unity that does not want to destroy the diversity of the Member States.

There is diversity among the Member States, inside them and among citizens. It existed also among the first six founding countries, but it was enhanced by each enlargement and now it is characterized by geographic, demographic, social, economic, political and cultural differences. In comparison with the national state, for the Union it is difficult to relate to elements like language, history, ethnicity or religion in the process of community building because they show a great diversity in the Union. For example, in the European Union there are 23 official languages and around 150 minority and regional languages, while religion has been both a unifying and dividing factor, fluctuating in time between the two roles. Moreover, there are national differences related to the identification with the Christian or secular values: mentioning or not religion in the Constitution and the legal provisions concerning religious education, symbols and minorities. To a great extent, these national variations are based on



two factors: the link between religion and national identity and the one between the church and the state.

The differences among the Member States start with the cultural, geographic, demographic, social- economic, structural and political system ones to influence in the end the political ones. For example, the surface of the country and the population's density are important both for the distribution of the MP seats in the European Parliament and when the qualified majority voting takes place in the Council. As John McCormik said, "if all the Member States had the same political and economic system, the same social structures, the same level of economic development and productivity and the same set of standards and regulations, integration would be easy". But this is not the case for the European Union. In order to better understand the situation we could follow certain economic indicators like the per capita GDP (the most used economic indicator for determining the economic performance of a county), the employment rate, the unemployment rate, the investments in Research & Development or other indicators ( like those in the fields of sustainable development, environment or energy).

Unity is harder to reach due to these differences related to the accession time and motivation, historical experiences, relationships with the rest of the world, political traditions, conceptions of nationhood, ethnicity and religion, levels of socio-economic development, traditions of alignment or neutralism, trading patterns or particular policy preoccupations. All these data are important because they influence states' attitude towards different European policies and Union's budget allocation. The Member States have different opinions concerning the balance between the public and private sphere, or the fields in which decisions should be taken at a national or community level. Moreover, due to the diversity of conditions within the Union the impact of a European decision from a certain political field differs from one state to another. As far as the citizens are concerned, their preferences for a policy to be decided at a national or community level depends on their satisfaction with the current national situation.

Going from the national to the regional level, we can see that it is also characterized by a great economic, social, cultural and political diversity. Regions differ in relation to their size, population, level of development, history, identity and political action. Thus, their approach to requests and means used to accomplish their objectives are divers and at the level of the European Union we can see both positive and negative examples of diversity accommodation.

Another element that has to be mentioned, and it is not a less important one, is the opinion diversity among the Union's citizens. With the help of the opinion pools done by the European Commission we find out useful information about the citizens' knowledge of the Union and their attitude towards several subjects: institutions, policies and priority policies, concerns and preoccupations, values, citizenship, satisfaction with the life in the EU, integration results, etc. Even though results vary, reflecting the cultural and opinion diversity of the Union, the pools show that the Union's citizens have the same preoccupations and concerns for the future – unemployment, crime and the economic situation- while the most important integration results are the free movement, the Euro and peace.

In the end, we have to say that by recognizing the national, regional and local diversity from an economic, social and cultural point of view, as well as the opinion differences among the citizens, the European leaders decided to consider diversity a force of democracy, an impulse for creativity and innovation, and not a barrier to the consolidation of the European project.

## **Chapter 2: Actors of the European construction**

When we refer to the European construction actors we can see the same two characteristics of unity and diversity – a unity given by the legal and institutional framework in which they operate and a diversity of roles, functions, interests and power they exercise. The institutional architecture is one of the defining elements of the European Union, a unique system that has no correspondent at the national or international level. The European Union is not a federation, but is more than an intergovernmental organization. The Member States remain sovereign and independent nations, but pool together part of their sovereignty and delegate certain decision-making powers to the common institutions. It is a challenge to describe the structure, functioning and the way the supranational, national, regional and local institutions inter-relate among them and with other bodies that represent citizens' interest (political parties, unions, NGOs or interest groups).

We could say that the European institutions tried to keep up with the Union's enlargement and consolidation processes; their number grew (with the entering into force of the Lisbon Treaty the European Council and the European Central Bank are institutions) and their competences extended (one example is the evolution of the European Parliament from a

consultative role to clear attributions in the decision-making process). One of the objectives of the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties was to make the institutional framework more efficient. This does not mean that there are no more critics related to the democratic deficit or suspicions concerning the way in which the Commission and the working groups of the Council and Commission represent the supranational interests, keeping in mind that their members are still nominated by the Member States, or about the way in which the Presidency of the Council is able to manage the desire to defend the national interest with the duty to coordinate “the ensemble”, to reach an agreement that should look for the supranational European interest.

Not everybody agrees on the role of the nation state in the present European system. There are those who say that the state’s role changed. The state gave parte of its sovereignty to certain supranational institutions and even accepted to be monitored and controlled by them. On the other hand, there are those who claim that there are only few domains (customs union, competition, monetary and commercial policy, protection of marine biological resources) in which the Union substitutes the Member States by taking away their decision-making power. In the other sectors the Union only completes and coordinates the states’ actions or facilitates the compromise, its constraint power being limited. The state is still the main actor, even in the European Union, and it is represented in all power levels and in all sectors. Even the Commissioners, the judges of the European Court of Justice, the members of the Central Bank, of the Committee of the Regions and of the Social and Economic Committee and the members of parliament are all sensitive to the national realities and interests because they have either been nominated by the national governments or elected on national party lists.

Since we have mentioned the party lists we come back to the political parties, the representatives of the citizen’s interest at the national and European level, because also in this actor’s case the opinions diverge. The union considers the European political parties as an important element of democracy and of the creation of a European consciousness. There are people who disagree and say that we are facing a democratic deficit of the national parties, that they did not adapt to the European integration process and that they did not develop new rules and internal structures in order to be able to hold responsible the members who activate in the European institutions. All starts from the fact that the European issues and elections are considered “of second degree”, a sort of external affairs that are rarely included in the national campaigns. By not having the role of an educator in the European matters or that of a link

between the citizens and the European Union, the political parties allow the public opinion to structure itself or to be influenced by another important actor on the European scene – the media, which has a double role of informing and of opinion structuring. It is well known that the way in which journalists decide to present a piece of information, to accentuate certain aspects while neglecting or omitting others, influences people's perception and attitude towards an issue. However, most citizens admit that their main information source for the European integration is media.

More recent actors on the European scene are the regions and the civil society organizations. In the '80 and '90, the development of the cohesion policy and of the subsidiarity and proportionality principles determined a greater competence transfer towards the regional level and recognition of its economic, political and cultural importance. If the "Europe of the Regions" seems to be an accepted notion whose role is understood by most citizens, things are slightly different in the case of civil society organizations. The first problem we encounter when we try to present the role, structure or influence the civil society has in the European Union is that there is no clear definition of the civil society organizations in the Union's official documents. However, the Union recognizes their input in facilitating an open dialogue among all those involved or concerned by a certain political decision, their contribution to the reduction of the democratic deficit and to the legitimization of the decision-making process in the European Union. On their turn, the civil society organizations need access and credibility when dealing with the actors that define and implement the policies; they need to inform the institutions about their political interests and preferences. Thus, also the lobby strategy changed, from a reactive and destructive one, concentrated on the Member States and the veto procedure in the Council, to a more proactive one, concentrated on the Commission and Parliament.

Another issue is linked to the each group's interests and the influence. The institutional context, the resources, the group's organization and strategic choices determine its access capability and influence. Moreover, the interests it represents can be public or private, national or international. Therefore, we have several debates on the transparency of the decision-making process due to the unclarity concerning the influence of interest groups and experts in the entire European legislative process: from agenda and policy setting to the ratification and implementation stages. Although the European leaders tried to create a set of regulations in

order to make sure that interest groups representatives' influence and contribution in the legislative process is a positive and constructive one, there still are debates on the way their access could be monitored and regulated without limiting the information exchange.

The discussions about the democratic deficit and the rules that should govern the decision-making process in the European Union continue. In a European framework in which the interactions among actors are characterized both by competition and collaboration, the desire of all representatives of public, private, local, national or supranational interests is to increase the legitimacy and influence power they have at the European level.

### **Chapter 3: Concepts about unity in diversity**

Another current discussion topic is related to the nature and finality of the European integration process. The subject matter is not new; the debates started before the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community and have never ended. Thus we have theories that focus on the role of the nation state and the intergovernmental cooperation (realism, neo-realism, intergovernmentalism, neo-institutionalism) or on supranational cooperation and the role of regional and local actors and of the supranational institutions (federalism, functionalism, neo-functionalism). We can not say that one of the theories won. Actually, the European Union is the result of the confrontation and compromise between the two trends. It is more than an intergovernmental organization, but it isn't yet a federal state- it is a "hybrid". Federalist elements could be considered the citizenship, the coin, the budget, its own resources, the principle of subsidiarity, the co-decision procedure, the legal person, but another one misses- the constitution. The rejection of the Constitutional Treaty is considered to be a new victory of intergovernmentalism and a proof that the European citizens are not ready to move towards a federation. The supporters of this **trend** claim that the national interests are still well represented at each decision-making level and, excepting some sectors included in the community pile, the decisions are taken by the Member States. Furthermore, they argue that Europe has rejected the federal state model right from the beginning by stating the political aspirations included in the Preamble of the Treaty of Rome, which talked about "a union of the European people" and that the founding fathers did not want to create a federal state, but to enhance cooperation among states; supranationality was not designed to replace

intergovernmental cooperation, but to make it possible- the integration process was and is accomplished by the Member States and determined by their national interests.

As we have mentioned before, the European Union is “somewhere in-between”, between an intergovernmental organization and a federation. It is a hybrid that has no correspondent at the international level. That is why it had to face the classical challenges in unique way- internal and external challenges, globalization or the democratic deficit accusation.

The European Union is a system in which competences are being shared and negotiated. We have witnessed a shift from a state-centered system to one in which competences are delegated upwards to the European level and downwards to the sub-national level; a shift from a pyramidal system, strongly hierarchic and centralized, to a more subtle one, a network system with vertical and horizontal interactions and interactions between the internal and external political dimensions. The government and the state bodies no longer have a privileged role, but have to cooperate with the non-state actors, representatives of the civil society, NGOs, interest groups, etc. These changes do not involve the disappearance of the nation state, only the change of its role. Thus, a new approach was needed, a more complex and less rigid one, able to reconcile the general interest with the multiple particular interests, and to redefine the relations between the centre and the component units. This is why the concepts of governance, good governance and multi-level governance appeared.

The Commission defines governance as “the rules, processes and behaviors affecting how interests are uttered, resources are managed and powers are exercised in a society” and clarifies the notion of “good governance”, which represents “the transparent and responsible management of human, natural, economic and financial resources in view of a fair and sustainable development”, a type of governance based on principles like “participation, openness, accountability, effectiveness, coherence, subsidiarity and proportionality”.

Concluding, we could say that the European governance is an approach that tries to unite the different perspectives on the complexity, diversity and dynamism of interactions among a variety of actors. It deals with both the vertical dimension- the interactions among the actors on different territorial levels (supranational, national, regional and local) and the horizontal dimension- the network within which the role of the non-state actors is increasing. Attention is not paid to the integration process itself, but to the problems it might cause

(efficacy, legitimacy, sustainability) and the way it functions (negotiations, decision-making, implementation, new partnership building, etc.). Another important remark would be that promoting the new types of governance is not only the responsibility of the European institutions or of the Commission, but of all the public and private authority levels and of the civil society.

Precisely this type of network relations caused during the last years the emergence of two complementary phenomena- globalization and fragmentation, integration and differentiation. On one hand, people have the feeling that they are part of transnational communities and wish for the benefits of the global economy, and on the other hand they experience the fear to lose the collective identity and the traditional values. As Paul Kennedy said, “our world and our lives are modeled by the conflicting trends of globalization and identification. When the world becomes too big to be controlled, the social actors want to reduce it to their size while they start looking for a meaning. Briefly, identity becomes our only source of meaning”.

Identity usually builds around the common history, traditions, language and ethnicity. But when these elements show a great diversity, on what could the European identity be built and does the European Union need an identity? It seems that since the '70, the creation of a European identity has become an objective for the European leaders and since then we can follow the history and evolution of this concept and discourse. Some people suggested a change of mentality and of our perspective on history. Recognizing alterity, accepting the Europeans in their diversity should be complemented by the gathering of the Latin, German, Anglo-Saxon, Slavic and Judaic cultures in order to create the European common heritage and those cultural resources that can be relevant for the future challenges of the European society should be identified. In addition, the long common history of negative experiences should motivate the Europeans and give them a feeling of fulfillment because democracy won against the catastrophes of the past. In fact, identity is built through continuous interactions, being a process that includes construction and reconstruction and the community is the idea we have about it and the meaning we associate to it.

Those less confident in the capability of this concept to unite the European citizens claim that the call for community and identity take place when these are missing, when we can not perceive a feeling of cohesion or holism. Then, a strong European identity would not be a

functional precondition for a democratic governance of the Union. Since the European citizens are aware that there is an economic and legal area that influences their lives ( most of them considering it a good thing), it means that we already have a “weak” type of identity, enough for the democratic institutions to function.

Others say that we should make the difference between Europe and the European project, between a type of cultural, spiritual and religious identity and the European bureaucratic project; between the spiritual and civic identity. The cultural and political identities are two different things that do not overlap in concept. Thus the lack of a cultural identity among Europeans can not be used as an argument against the development of a political one. Moreover, the political identity based on a set of constitutional values and principles, on a social-relations model and on a governance system, and able to generate a European public sphere does not oppose diversity or change and could offer a framework for the confrontation of the diverse cultural national identities.

The European identity remains a fluid concept, whose nature and significance are not clearly established. Seen as a necessity or as a utopia, the European identity, like the European project, is still under construction, in evolution. In order to present the Union’s actions designed to create a unity and community feeling we have chosen two of its policies- the regional and cultural policies- a policy that deals with the economic wellbeing of the citizens and another one that deals with their “soul”.

#### **Chapter 4: Institutionalizing the principle of unity in diversity in the EU**

Through its laws and policies the European Union tries to create “an ever close union among people”. But the unity concept is a complex one, it refers to economic, political and spiritual unity. During the first years, the European leaders focused on the economic integration because it was a sector in which all the Member States were ready to leave aside the different national interests in order to reach a common goal- the economic progress. Meanwhile, it became clear that the economic integration is not enough, only the economic interests can not unite the Europeans. New cohesion elements had to be found and thus the creation of a European identity became one of the most important objectives of the Union.

The new European identity is based on the solidarity and cohesion principles, two principles promoted also by the Regional Policy. The European Regional Policy is one of the



most important policies of the Union, its purpose being to promote a harmonious development from a territorial, economic and social point of view. Trying to diminish the disparities that increased after the 2004 and 2007 enlargements, the policy has several main characteristics. First, the financial resources are substantial, representing almost one third of the Union's budget. Secondly, the Regional Policy is an important redistributive policy. Thirdly, an important characteristic of this policy is the partnership concept, based on which the actors at the community, national, regional and local levels are involved in the different stages of the process. Finally, the regional policy is based on four fundamental principles: resource concentration on priority objectives, program planning, partnership and added value.

The policy's purpose is to invest both in human and material capital in order to generate economic growth, social inclusion, new jobs in the urban and rural areas, and to improve the quality of the environment.

The Regional Policy offers new opportunities in the entire Union's territory, while the results can be seen by all the European citizens- them being the main beneficiaries of this policy. The Regional Policy has been developing by taking into account the changes at the global level. The amount allotted has increased, now representing one third of the Union's budget, and the general objectives have been modified in order to respond to the internal and external challenges. At present, the Regional Policy does not invest only in infrastructure, but also in competitiveness, innovation, research and development. As the former European Commissioner Danuta Hubner said, "on the long run, to make the European regions more competitive and attractive to live and to invest in, means making them more innovative".

In the end, we could say that the recent reports related to the economic and social cohesion within the European Union<sup>1</sup> show a reduction of the disparities among regions and among Member States, an improvement of the budgetary deficit and of the growth rate. However, there still are considerable inter-regional differences and that is why efforts have to be done in order to reach the Lisbon Agenda targets. There is a need for the Community actors, especially the European Commission, to draw up a long term strategy, able to face the future challenges (2013-2020), and for the regional actors to find specific solutions for their problems.

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<sup>1</sup> *Growing Regions, growing Europe-Fifth progress report on economic and social cohesion* (2008), *19<sup>th</sup> Annual Report on Implementation of Structural Funds* (2007), *Annual Report of the Cohesion Fund 2007* (2008), etc.

Coming back to the idea of unity and diversity, it can be applied also to the Cultural Policy of the European countries. The European Union offers some principles, recommendations and guiding lines, but each Member State enforces its own model of cultural policy. There are differences concerning the relation with the other national policies, the centralization degree, the funds allotted from the national budget or the priorities per sectors. If we were to make a comparison with the Regional Policy, the Cultural Policy became a priority on the European agenda only in the '90 and has a smaller budget- around 400 million Euros for 2007-2013 compared to the 350 billion Euros allotted for the Regional Policy for the same period of time. Some analysts claim that due to the small budget and relatively limited competences the Union can not have spectacular results in this field. But if we look at the way this policy developed we can not ignore the progress it made, with impact on a longer or shorter term, but with outcomes both at the citizens and Union's levels.

It all started from the idea that the richness of the European cultural heritage is given by the duality between the common values and inheritance and the regional and local diversity. Therefore, the European Union's mission became to protect and promote this heritage, both at the internal and international level, the cultural component being included in the external affairs as well as in the other policies of the Union. In order to show the richness of the European culture and to create the feeling of a European citizenship based on culture, the Union follows several objectives like the preservation of the common heritage, creativity stimulation, access to culture of large numbers of people, and stimulation of intercultural dialogue in order to make sure that the European cultural diversity is known, respected and promoted.

All these objectives can be reached only if there is dialogue and partnership among the European institutions, Member States, civil society and professionals in the field of culture-cultural institutions, NGOs, European networks, associations, etc. - and if creative partnerships are developed between the cultural sector and other sectors (IT, research, tourism, etc.) in order to enhance the social and economic impact of the investments in culture and creativity. Through the studies made on the culture economy in general and on the different initiatives of the Commission and of the Council of Europe<sup>2</sup> it was acknowledged the importance of cultural

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<sup>2</sup> *Report on the implementation of Culture 2000* (2008), *The Economy of Culture in Europe* (2006), *The role of culture in preventing and reducing poverty and social exclusion* (2005), etc.

industry and of creativity for the Union's economy and competitiveness. Creativity stimulates innovation, economic growth, employment, tourism and infrastructure investments. Additionally, these programs and initiatives had an impact on people, operators, policies and cultural policies. Partnerships and networks were created, which continue to operate and to have results even after the financing period; more funds were allotted to intercultural dialogue by the development of co-financing national funds and the cultural operators became more aware of the benefits of intercultural cooperation. Thus we can see European added value and social and economic impact. It was proven that through cultural activities one could fight poverty and promote social inclusion, especially for the risk groups- unemployed young people, elderly, poor families, immigrants, refugees or disabled. The European Union's role is very important in promoting and financing these projects that reunite the objectives of the cultural and social agendas. Moreover, there is a need for a common vision, for a long term strategy and initiatives that have to be promoted not only by the political leaders, but also by the representatives of the civil society and the media.

## **Conclusions**

Since the analysis of the two policies wishes to be actually an exemplification of the economic and cultural instruments the Union uses in the consolidation process, we thought that it would be useful to understand the context, the actors and their motivations, as well as the current theoretical concepts in order to determine the results, relevance and impact of the two policies. Based on this investigation we have tried to see whether the European unity is accomplished or still a future project, and in which way it might be completed. In this respect, we have analyzed the Union's official documents, the discourse of the political elites and several reference papers of well-known observers and analysts of the European integration process. Moreover, we have used the reports and statistical data published by the European institutions in order to have an overview of the social and economic indicators, the resources, the programs' efficiency and even the citizens' attitude towards different policy aspects.

It is true that due to the lack of common definitions, standards and statistical and methodological instruments it is difficult to make a comparative analysis between a "rich" policy, with many studies, report and statistical data, like the Regional Policy and a more recent one, like the Cultural Policy. The authors of the studies mentioned before identified this

problem and suggested the development of common instruments. Until then, we can only notice the progress made by both policies in relation to their strategy, objectives, programs (from qualitative and quantitative point of view) and impact.

Like the European Union, these are future projects that will have to face the challenges of internal diversity, new global trends and future requirements and expectations coming from the European citizens. However, if the Regional Policy manages to reduce the economic and social disparities in the Union and to improve its competitiveness and dynamism, thus reducing the economic and social diversity, and the Cultural Policy, through intercultural dialogue and other initiatives, succeeds to prove the competitive advantage of cultural diversity and to stimulate creativity, innovation, interest and respect for culture- both common and diverse heritage- then they would prove that the European Union's motto works, that *we are all united in diversity*.