

POLITICKÉ VEDY / POLITICAL SCIENCES

Časopis pre politológiu, najnovšie dejiny, medzinárodné vzťahy, bezpečnostné štúdiá / Journal for Political Sciences, Modern History, International Relations, security studies

URL časopisu / URL of the journal: <http://www.fpvmv.umb.sk/politickevedy>

Autor(i) / Author(s): Maceják Štefan
Článok / Article: Európa za oceánom / Europe behind Ocean
Vydavateľ / Publisher: Fakulta politických vied a medzinárodných vzťahov – UMB
Banská Bystrica / Faculty of Political Sciences and
International Relations – UMB Banská Bystrica

Odporúčaná forma citácie článku / Recommended form for quotation of the article:

MACEJÁK, Š. 2012. Europe behind Ocean. In *Politické vedy*. [online]. Roč. 15, č. 2, 2012. ISSN 1335 – 2741, s. 201 – 204.

Dostupné na internete:

<http://www.fpvmv.umb.sk/userfiles/file/2_2012/macejak.pdf>.

Poskytnutím svojho príspevku autor(i) súhlasil(i) so zverejnením článku na internetovej stránke časopisu *Politické vedy*. Vydavateľ získal súhlas autora / autorov s publikovaním a distribúciou príspevku v tlačenej i online verzii. V prípade záujmu publikovať článok alebo jeho časť v online i tlačenej podobe, kontaktujte redakčnú radu časopisu: politicke.vedy@umb.sk.

By submitting their contribution the author(s) agreed with the publication of the article on the online page of the journal. The publisher was given the author's / authors' permission to publish and distribute the contribution both in printed and online form. Regarding the interest to publish the article or its part in online or printed form, please contact the editorial board of the journal: politicke.vedy@umb.sk.

EUROPE BEHIND OCEAN

Štefan Maceják*

ŠMIHULA, D. – BLAŽEK, L. – CSONTOS, J.: *Európa za oceánom – Zámorské územia krajín Európskej únie*. Skalica: SEVS, 2011, 110 s. ISBN 978-80-89391-26-4

The textbook by three authors based at Central European College in Skalica (Stredoeurópska vysoká škola v Skalici) deals with a topic not so widely reflected within the local contexts. In fact, the book is the first systematic attempt to map and evaluate the phenomenon of overseas territories of the EU members.

Despite that fact that the EU is traditionally associated with the European continent, its integral part is made by several minor territories in Africa, Americas and Caribbean Islands and islands in the Indian and the Atlantic Ocean; a little known fact in Slovakia. It usually concerns former colonies that progressively established special institutional-legal relationship with their respective metropolis. They equally concern some special territories (e.g. British Royal Dependencies, Spanish Enclaves in Africa, Faroe Islands). The progressive European integration brought up the need to tackle the legal status of the above mentioned territories in relation to the EU.

As stated by the authors: *“The overseas territories pertaining to the EU states are no more considered colonies but direct and self-governing parts of their respective motherlands. Their inhabitants are fully entitled to citizenship in their mother countries in Europe and thus – with the exception of several of them – are also entitled to the EU citizenship. It became a fact back in 2002 with the British Act on British Overseas Territories, granting the full British citizenship to all citizens living in British overseas territories – a majority of which is neither impoverished nor underdeveloped.”*

The most peculiar ones are believed to be Rockall rocks and Peñón de

* PhDr. Mgr. Štefan Maceják, PhD. is Head of the Institute of International Relations, Central Europe College in Skalica, Slovakia, e-mail: stefanmacejak@gmail.com.

Vélez de la Gomera, a Spanish peninsula off the coast of Morocco.

By no means these territories can be considered a homogeneous group, whether approached from legal, cultural, economic or any other perspective. On the other hand, based on their status in relation to the EU, we can distinguish three basic categories:

a) remote regions pertaining to the EU countries (listed in Article 349 and 355, Par. 1 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union), e.g. The Azores, The Canary Islands, Réunion)

b) adjacent overseas countries and regions with special liaisons towards the EU, which are not part of the EU (listed in Annex II, Article 355, Par 2 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union), e.g. Greenland, French Polynesia, Cayman Islands, British Antarctic Territory etc.

c) special overseas and oceanic territories pertaining to the EU countries (provided that their relation to the EU has to be characterized individually, largely based on the Article 355, Par 5 of The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union), e.g. The Faeroe Islands, Ceuta and Melilla etc.

The direct territorial scope of the Treaties and, eventually, the direct liaisons towards the EU, both exclude those territories and countries having liaisons on the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland only by means of their membership in the British Commonwealth and a personal union.

The EU law does not treat the status of overseas territories and special cases of oceanic territories in its completeness. It leaves a wide scope of possible legal treatment to both the countries administering the above mentioned overseas territories and special cases and their respective autonomous legal bodies.

The territories include a large sea coast wealth and (marine) exclusive economic zone: *“For instance, 200-mile area of exclusive economic zone surrounding the inhabited French Island of Clipperton situated in the Pacific Ocean is comparable by size to the continental and metropolitan France... They confirm the status of European Union as a player with global responsibility and make a preview of the new – transatlantic – vector of further possible EU enlargements.”*

The book offers more detailed descriptions of the territories based on their respective categories. Well-arranged depictions provide information on the size, population number, basic social-economic characteristics and constitutional status and relationship to the EU. In fact *“All these overseas territories are typical of small or non-existing population, particular ecologic and biological*

diversity, limited economic base, and are strongly dependent on imported goods and energies.” They focus on a limited spectre of economic activities – navy, tropical crops, fishing, tourism and financial services. Some of them are less fortunate (Mayotte, Monserrat), some are extremely wealthy (The Bermuda, The Cayman Islands, Norman Island). Basically, these are more developed when compared to the islands and territories in their neighbourhood with no constitutional liaison to some European country. *“They are considered ‘showcases’ of the EU representing its political and social values and being foothold of further developing relationships with the remaining countries of the respective regions.”* In addition to that, they are of large importance as being military, transit and communication bases.

The total area reaches up to 4.3 million square kilometres (even though it is largely composed of Antarctic and Greenland ice). The total number of population *“...is higher than the total of 11 EU member states (6.2 mil).”*

One has to agree with authors when saying: *“For these reasons we are fully entitled to speak of the existence of ‘overseas European Union’ as a specific part of the EU requiring adequate attention and specific approach.”*

To conclude, the book comes with a brief overview of the territories with specific legal regime directly within the “continental European Union” (Livigno, Mount Athos, Northern Cyprus etc.)

As mentioned above, the territories point out to another – oceanic – potential vector of EU enlargement. Recently, we have experienced that some island territories outside Europe have expressed their interest in being integrated within the EU or becoming part of some of its member states (The Republic of Cape Verde, some of the Comoro Islands). Even the current to-be-member status of Iceland serves as a sign of existence of such “oceanic vector” of enlargement; however, its geographic (not cultural) affiliation to Europe is easy to question.

The book is presented as a textbook; however, given its quality and possible outreach it is rather a monograph. It certainly overcomes the dimensions of a Slovak scholarly environment and can be well used at a number of Czech and Slovak academic and university departments focusing on international relations. It provides a decent grasp of the course of events in the overseas territories pertaining to the European countries and their legal ties with the EU. The issue of overseas and oceanic territories of the EU countries is tackled in its completeness – that is from legal, political, geographical and economic viewpoint.

It is equally pleasant to see the author giving room for adequate self-presentation to his co-authors, younger colleagues and students of the Central European College. It certainly is a seldom practice, as it has become customary to conclude the rest of the authors in the anonymous “et al.” formula.