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## CONFERENCE ON “CITIZENSHIP AND NATIONALITIES IN EUROPE”

**Daša Adašková\***

On April 27<sup>th</sup>, April 28<sup>th</sup> and April 30<sup>th</sup>, the Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica in co-operation with New Bulgarian University in Sofia and their European partners convened the series of three conferences entitled “Citizenship and Nationalities in Europe”. The forum brought together scholars, experts and partners to present their research and discuss on the matter, as well as to provide a platform to exchange the ideas on the concept of citizenship and nationality – terms nowadays widely used in the European Union, but still divergently defined. The languages of the Conference were French and English.

The first of the three conferences was held at the Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations of the Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica on April 27<sup>th</sup>. The opening remarks were given by **H. E. Jean-Marie Bruno**, Ambassador of France in the Slovak Republic; **Ms. Andrea Elscheková-Matisová**, Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to the Slovak Republic; **Ms. Anna Záborská**, Member of the European Parliament; **Prof. Beata Kosová**, Chancellor of the Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica; **Ms. Katarína Čižmarová**, Deputy Mayor of the City of Banská Bystrica; and **Prof. Peter Kulašik**, Dean of the Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations. The opening remarks were followed by the expert lectures organized into several panels of the first part of the Conference.

The first part of the Conference was initiated by the panel chaired by **Mr. Gérard Wormser** and **Mr. Gilles Rouet**. The panel was opened by **Claude Javeau** from the University in Brussels. His presentation was dedicated to the issue of the “nationality deficit” as a consequence of the grandeur and decadence of the Kingdom of Belgium. He was followed by **Grzegorz Pozarlik** from the Jagellonian University in Cracow who dedicated his presentation to the issue of European identity. In his lecture, **Mr. Pozarlik**

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stressed that fundamental assumption behind the thesis about European identity is a discursively constructed collective identity that manifests itself in the form of a deficit of European 'we identity' or in the form of a lack of 'sense of community'. He concluded that the EU citizenship is the base for manifestation of collective political sense of belonging to the political community and the strongest factor influencing a given type of collective political EU identity. According to **Mr. Pozarlik**, this assumption is particularly relevant for understanding of dynamics of European identity concept in the light of the EU Eastern enlargement. His presentation was followed by **Mr. François Soulages** from the Paris 8 University who presented a lecture dedicated to the issue of citizenship and identity in the era of general mobility, then by **Mr. Jan Koper** from Matej Bel University who dealt with modern mechanisms of a civil self-identification. According to **Mr. Koper**, 'new citizenship' reflects new and unconventional ways of civic self-identification with small social and political communities that form the basis of political participation. Identification with the global trends and their positive and negative symptoms brings about an overlap of citizenship across the borders. Ideological affiliation obtains a new form; relationship between national and civic aspects of self-identification may also have a brand new ways of manifestation. **Mr. Koper** concludes that there is also a new feature, the so called 'crisis citizenship' and identification of citizenship with the need to address serious national or global problems. Next speaker, **Mr. Jamil Sayal** from the Pierre Mendès University in France, focused in his presentation on the French model of the EU citizenship. The last speaker on the panel, **Mr. Donat Mierzejewski** from Pila in Poland concluded the lectures with the presentation concerning local community as the essential factor of the formation of the modern civil society. **Mr. Mierzejewski** focused on the issue of local communities in Poland as the most important level of social activity in the process of modern civil society and citizenship building. His presentation concluded the first panel and was followed by a vivid discussion.

The Conference continued with presentations of the second panel, opened by **Mr. Serge Dufoulon** from the Pierre Mendès University in France who examined the issue of the secular citizens from the perspective of the "sacredness" of the nationality. He was followed by **Mr. Antoni Galabov** from the New Bulgarian University of Sofia and his presentation dealing with political socialisation of European values towards civil maturity. The third panellist, **Mr. Martin Klus** from the University of Trnava, presented different positions of

citizenship, nationalities and minorities in the European Union. In his presentation, **Mr. Klus** examined how the European Union influences citizenship, nationalities and minorities in member states. The issues were presented through a comparison of different approaches in two EU member states: the German-speaking inhabitants of southern Tirol in Italy and the Russian-speaking inhabitants of Estonia. In the last part of his presentation **Mr. Klus** dealt with the problem of strained relations between Slovakia and Hungary. His contribution was followed by **Mr. Mohamed El Methni** from the Pierre Mendès University in France and his presentation on the issue of the enlargement of public sphere and new citizenships. Next speaker on the panel, **Mr. Peter Terem** from the Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, gave a lecture on nationalism, providing the analysis of its complex essence and the variety of its expressions. The first part of the conference was concluded by **Ms. Anna Krasteva** from the New Bulgarian University and her presentation focused on the analysis of the evolution of the post-communist concept of citizenship and the concept of citizenship in the EU.

The second part of the Conference was dedicated to the issue of citizenship, nationalism and democracy, and was chaired by **Ms. Monika Uhlerová** and **Mr. Serge Dufoulon**. The first presentation was given by **Mr. Branislav Kováčik** from the Matej Bel University who dealt with the crisis of legitimacy as one of the crucial challenges for modern theory of democracy, as well as the challenge it represents for the basic organizational principles of a modern state. **Mr. Kováčik** explained fundamental elements of the crisis of legitimacy in modern political theory, and he also pointed out some aspects of the issue that presents one of the most important implications for modern state. He was followed by **Ms. Tamara Gella** from the State University in Orel who dealt with the issue of national identity in Russia and its main aspects in the historical and sociological context. In her presentation, **Ms. Gella** firstly outlined the development of European identity in contemporary Russian Federation. Then she focused on historical review of national identity development in Russia and in modern Europe. Finally, she analysed contemporary process of the development of national mentality among the citizens of the multinational Russian Federation. The third lecturer in the second part of the Conference was **Ms. Adriana Mikulčíková** from the Matej Bel University who focused on specific dimensions of citizenship in Europe, strongly influenced by the process of globalisation.

The second panel of this part of the Conference was hosted by **Mr. Rastislav Kazanský** and **Mr. Martin Šuplata**, all from the Matej Bel University. **Mr. Kazanský** provoked many reactions and a vivid discussion following his presentation focused on the concept of nation in contemporary Europe. He stressed that although the concept of nation persists, its content and meaning have certainly changed as a consequence of the integration processes taking place in Europe. The aim of the presentation was to analyse the relevance of the status of nation not only in contemporary international relations, but in the future as well, in order to analyse the prospects for the continuous cooperation and the preservation of cultural and political diversity in Europe.

The third and last part of the Conference was dedicated to the issue of minorities and neighbourhood. It was chaired by **Ms. Martina Bolečeková** and **Mr. Antoni Galabov**. The first panel was opened by **Ms. Zofia Sujkowska** and **Mr. Artur Zycki** from the University of Białystok and the University of Kielce in Poland. They presented their lecture on the influence of stereotypes on contemporary Polish-Russian relationship with the main aim to discuss and analyse phobias and prejudices of both nations towards each other caused by historical background. According to these scholars although in closer personal relations both nations feel a mutual tie of friendship usually explained as an affinity of the language and mentality, the negative stereotypes in Polish-Russian relationships stemming from the history are strongly influencing mutual interstate relations. These stereotypes are the sources of national consciousness as well. As a result, **Ms. Sujkowska** and **Mr. Zycki** concluded that the phobias and aversions between Poles and Russians are not to be easily overcome in the future. The second panellist, **Ms. Marina Vekua** from the University in Tbilisi, focused in her presentation on the analysis of the position of Georgian nation in Europe during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. **Ms. Vekua** was followed by **Ms. Jolana Darulová** and **Ms. Katarína Košťalová** from the Matej Bel University. In their joint presentation they discussed the issue of national minorities in the Slovak Republic from the ethnological point of view. The last presentation on the panel was given by **Mr. Dušan Hancko** from the Matej Bel University on the topic of the Slovak and Czech identity during the years 1939 and 1945.

The last panel of the conference was opened by **Ms. Kristína Bocková** from the Matej Bel University. She analysed the influence of the European Union on violent conflicts in its neighbourhood, applying her findings on the

case study of Southern Caucasus. She was followed by **Ms. Svetlana Pinzari** from the Matej Bel University and her comparative study on citizenship and nationalities in Moldova and Slovakia. The last panellist of the Conference was **Mr. Abdelrazak Bouali** from the Matej Bel University, who focused on the problem of defining the ethnic and cultural minority in the context of the EU.

The first series of the conferences was concluded by a ceremonial dinner with all the participants. It was held in a friendly atmosphere in order to give the participants an opportunity to continue the discussion and exchange their views and ideas in a less formal way. The series of conferences continued on 28<sup>th</sup> April at the Faculty of Economics of the Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica and on 30<sup>th</sup> April at the New Bulgarian University in Sofia.