

# Agata Ziętek

---

## The European Cultural Space

---

Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska. Sectio K, Politologia 12, 11-23

---

2005

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej [bazhum.muzhp.pl](http://bazhum.muzhp.pl), gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

AGATA ZIĘTEK

*The European Cultural Space*

---

Europejska przestrzeń kulturowa

The question of Europe becomes particularly important, especially in connection with the integration processes within the European Union. Which countries can be included in Europe, and which ones excluded from it? Where does Europe begin, and where does it end? What are its boundaries? What are the factors that integrate Europe, and which factors divide it? The questions can be multiplied, and it is difficult to find simple answers to them. The problem in hand constitutes a real challenge, especially considering the multitude of different ideas that can be found in the studies of the problem. The present paper constitutes a part of a larger study in which topics omitted or only hinted at will be discussed at greater length.

There are many conceptions and visions of Europe to be found in the literature of the subject. Can Europe be treated as a cultural unity that could become the basis of unification? As Wojciech Burszta rightly observed, the concept of culture appears when the existing state of affairs has been disturbed.<sup>1</sup> At this point, one can also refer to the words ascribed to J. Monnet: *If I were to begin again, I would begin with culture*. According to Zdzisław Krasnodębski, culture can constitute a kind of antidote, whenever economic mechanisms or state institutions begin to malfunction, because culture can provide, depending on the situation, an explanation of the reason behind the conflict as well as suggestions of how these problems might be solved by referring to the common

---

<sup>1</sup> W. Burszta, *Dwie Europy*, [in:] *Dylematy tożsamości europejskiej pod koniec drugiego tysiąclecia*, ed. J. Mucha and W. Olszewski, Toruń 1997, p. 42.

culture. Culture can both bring people together and differentiate, separate them from others.<sup>2</sup>

What criteria can be used to define European cultural space? Many ambiguities appear here. There is also total agreement as to whether European cultural space actually exists. Taking into account the existing studies, I believe that it is possible to distinguish two fundamental criteria that can be used in an attempt to define European cultural space: the geographical and civilisational criteria.

#### GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES OF EUROPE

It is difficult to demarcate the boundaries of Europe. The difficulty increases when we try to determine not only the geographical boundaries but also the boundaries of the European community, because the boundaries of Europe have always been indefinite, unstable, and changeable. They have undergone many transformations as a result of historical factors. The historical space of Europe changed many times as a result of invasions and conquests by non-European peoples, and, on the other hand, European peoples conquered other territories, reaching the geographical borders of the continent, and colonised them. The physical shape of Europe is defined by a very uneven coast line. The most questionable is the Eastern boundary linking European peninsula with the continent of Asia. Although the remaining borders of Europe are delimited by more natural boundaries such as sea coasts, they have not always provided protection against change and course of history. Seas do not constitute an obstacle for people who governed by unbounded curiosity desire new discoveries. Many of the European seas are Mediterranean seas which did not divide but rather united the inhabitants of the continent. On many sides, Europe is surrounded by islands which also influenced the continent. Finally, the seas which separate the European continent from others are sometimes so narrow that instead of forming an impassable boundary they function as a bridge.

The roots of European civilisation and culture go back to the ancient East. They were transferred to the West through trade and colonisation or thanks to cultural contacts. One of the legends about Europe refers to Greek mythology. According to it, the name of Europe comes from the name of a princess, Agenor's daughter, who was seduced and kidnapped by Zeus appearing in the shape of a white bull. Zeus put her on the coast of a continent which from that moment on assumed her name. There is another, more mundane legend. It was reported by the Greek writer Herodotus, and later adopted by the early Christian theologian Lactantius, eager to undermine the ancient myth with erotic undertones. In this

---

<sup>2</sup> Z. Krasnodębski, *Postmodernistyczne rozterki kultury*, Warszawa 1996, p. 167.

version of the legend a merchant from Crete kidnapped Europe on his bull-shaped ship as a fiancée for his king Asterius. From that time on the Cretans came to be called Europeans.<sup>3</sup> These myths testify to the Eastern roots of European civilisation. The transfer of elements of the older civilisation of the East to new areas gave rise to a new quality. Europe's journey is at the same time a symbol of movement so characteristic of the Mediterranean civilisation. Europe followed the route from the East to the West. Europe's curiosity brought it to ruin, but also gave rise to a new civilisation.

Probably, as mythology tells us, Europe's father was not indifferent to his daughter's fate. He sent her five brothers in pursuit of their sister. Phoenix travelled west through Libya to the place of the future Carthage. Unfortunately, he came back empty-handed. The land of Phoenicia was named after him. Cilix went to the future Cilicia, Phineus reached the area of Dardanelle, and Thasus first went to Olympus in Greece, and then to the island of Thasos. Cadmus, the most distinguished of the brothers, went to Rhodes, and then to Thrace, and thence to Delphi, where he asked the oracle about his sister's place of abode. The oracle advised him to stop the search and follow a cow and build a city at the place where the cow would collapse in exhaustion. Why was it so difficult to find Europe? Because in their search for her mythological representation, the five brothers discovered her hardly definable geographical reality. However, they founded cities, thereby leaving some material heritage behind them. Thus, it can be concluded that "To search for Europe is to build Europe".\*

On the other hand there is the story of Japheth. It is less well known, but thanks to it Europe, from its very beginnings constituted a distinct geographical entity. Japheth was one of Noah's sons. In *Liber hebraicarum questionum in Genesim* of St. Jerome (346-420 AD) and in St. Ambrose's (b. 340 AD) interpretation, after the Flood, Noah gave the three parts of the world (Asia, Africa and Europe) to each of his three sons Shem, Ham and Japheth.<sup>5</sup>

St. Ambrose maintained that Shem's descendants were essentially good, Ham's weak, and Japheth's indifferent. He described them as pagans. There was one positive element among these characteristics. Japheth's could adapt easily to new circumstances and change. For example, they could become Christians. Jean-Marie Domenach writes that unlike the majority of other cultures, based on homeostatic systems with a stabilising function, which can be easily subjected to structural analysis, the genius of Europe consists in its ability to destroy structures and create new ones.<sup>6</sup> "Japheth" denotes freedom, expanse and expansion. This was used in the interpretation of the expansion of the Roman

---

<sup>3</sup> A. Pagden, *Europe: Conceptualizing a Continent*, [in:] *The idea of Europe. From Antiquity to the European Union*, ed. A. Pagden, Cambridge 2002, p. 34.

<sup>4</sup> D. de Rougemont, *The Idea of Europe*, New York, London 1966, p. 22-23.

<sup>5</sup> *The Idea...*, *op. tit.*, p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> J.-M. Domenach, *Europa: wyzwanie dla kultury*, trans. H. Sikorska, Warszawa 1992, p. 53.

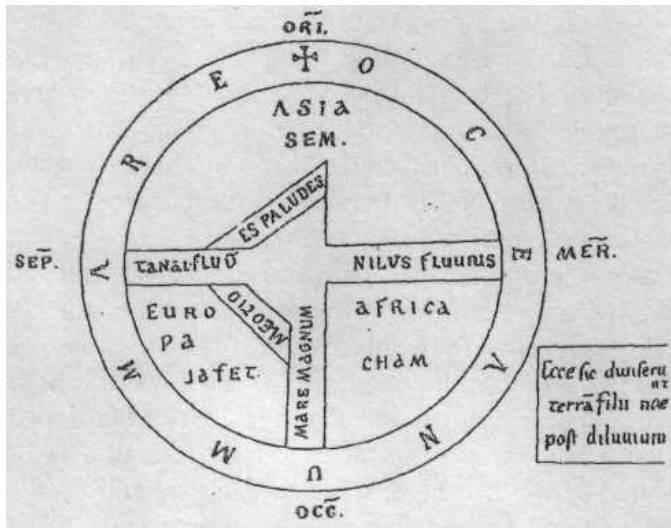


Fig. 1. The so-called Noachide map, Isidor-Codex 236, Saint Gall Monastic Library, Switzerland (10th century). From: K. Miller, *Mappae Mundi*, Volume VI (Stuttgart, 1898). (Photo: British Library Board, London). Legend: Ecce... = Lo: thus did the sons of Noah divide the world after the Flood; Tanai. Fluv. = the River Don; Nilus Fluv. = the River Nile; Meotides Paludes = the Sea of Azov, [in:] *The History of the Idea of Europe*, ed. Kevin Wilson, Jan von der Dussen

Empire onto the whole Europe and the remaining *orbis terrarum*, which later initiated the spread of Christianity. According to Isidore the bishop of Seville,<sup>7</sup> Japheth's descendants inhabited Europe from the Taurus (Turkey) in Central Asia to the Atlantic.<sup>8</sup> Isidore also proposed a division of the world into three parts which was adopted by medieval geography (Fig. 1). According to this division, Asia occupied one half, and Europe and Africa one third each. The Mediterranean Sea *Mare Magnum* constituted the boundary between Europe and Africa, the Nile River separates Africa from Asia, and the boundary between Europe and Asia runs along the Tanis River and Meotides Paludes, now known as the Don River and the Azores Sea. However, this division suggests that, despite its separateness, Europe has always been coupled with Asia, unlike Africa which constituted a completely separate part. The whole world was surrounded by the ocean.

The age of geographical discoveries and voyages which began on a large scale in the late 15th century instigated the development of cartography. It turned out then that Europe occupies only a small part of the world. On the other hand, it

<sup>7</sup> Isidore of Seville, *hidorus Hisplensis* (c. 560–630) author of theological and historical works, as well as a general encyclopaedia *Etymologiarum libri XX seu Origines*, which enjoyed immense popularity for over five centuries, after *Nowa encyklopedia powszechna PWN*, Warszawa 1997, vol. 3.

<sup>8</sup> *The Idea...*, *op. cit.*, p. 20.



Fig. 2. Europe as Queen, Sebastian Minister, *Cosmographia Universalis* (1588), (Photo: Basel University Library, [in:] *The History of the Idea of Europe*, ed. Kevin Wilson, Janvon der Dussen, London, New York 1993, p. 52

was emphasised that it is the most powerful and wonderful continent. Thus, we can observe the emergence of the Europecentric view of the world. In the *Atlas Minor* published by Hondiusa in Amsterdam in 1607, Europe was classified as the first continent on account of its resources, population, and achievements of its inhabitants.<sup>9</sup> It was stressed that the continent is inhabited by the descendants of Japheth. At this time, Europe began to be identified with Christendom.

The 16th century witnessed the appearance of many copies of the map of Europe representing it as a woman-queen. This representation is grounded in the myth of Europe (Fig. 2).

The geographical conceptions of Europe have evolved in the course of the centuries. There is the traditional geographical ideal of Europe as the area from

<sup>9</sup> Pim den Boer, *Europe to 1914: the making of an idea*, [in:] *The History of the Idea of Europe*, ed. K. Wilson, J. der Dussen, London, New York 1993, p. 46.

the Atlantic to the Ural Mountains. This approach reveals a highly diversified territory. Stein Rokkan in his definition of Europe took into account two axes. The East-West axis based on the geo-political and geo-economic criterion and the North-South axis based on the geo-cultural criterion.<sup>10</sup> It is possible to distinguish many boundaries dividing Europe into its "Western" and "Eastern" parts by employing different criteria.

According to Oskar Halecki the very concept of "Western Europe" is a highly relative term and can be applied to a geographical region rather than a cultural one.<sup>11</sup> Generally speaking, the West has no problems with self-identification, when the identification of Europe with Western Europe is involved. This is largely a result of the period after the Second World War, when Europe was ideologically divided for many years. Is "Eastern Europe" then less European than the Western part? The Eastern part of Europe is not uniform and more diversified than the Western part. Eastern Europe partakes of both the Greek and the Roman current of the ancient and Christian European tradition. It was Eastern Europe that became the shield of Europe as a whole, protecting its faith and culture against Asiatic invaders from the Turkish straits and lands to the north of the Black Sea.<sup>12</sup> Some distinguish several Europes. Jen Sziics writes that the coordinates of Europe's development are as follows: the first expansion of the barbarian peoples absorbed the Western heritage of Rome and led to the formation of the concept of the "West" (500-800); after the pacification of the last barbarians, the first expansion of the West to the East and the North (1000-1300) stretched the boundaries of Occidental Europe (including in its area Northern and Central-Eastern Europe). The influence of Byzantium, protecting the Eastern heritage of Rome, defined the development of South-Eastern Europe and the "trimmed" Eastern Europe. The modern period is born on two sides: on the one side it crosses the Atlantic and reaches America (and later also Scandinavia), on the other side the big expansion of the "trimmed" Eastern Europe creates a "complete" Eastern Europe by annexing the area from Siberia to the Pacific. From that moment on Central-Eastern Europe found itself squeezed between two immense territories.<sup>13</sup>

As has already been mentioned the most debatable is the Eastern boundary. First of all, as a result of the difficulty connected with defining the place of Russia. Was Russia as a whole a part of Europe, or was it only its part, and if so, then which part? At this point it would be appropriate to mention the ideas of the westernisers and the Slavophiles. The former believe that all of Russia is a part of Europe. What distinguishes Russia from the rest of Europe is the fact that, in

<sup>10</sup> After G. Therbom, *Drogi do nowoczesnej Europy*, Warszawa-Kraków 1998, p. 317.

<sup>11</sup> O. Halecki, *Historia Europy - jej granice i podziały*, Lublin 2000, p. 110.

<sup>12</sup> O. Halecki, *Historia...*, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

<sup>13</sup> J. Szucs, *Trzy Europy*, Lublin 1995, p. 33-34, trans. J. M. Kłoczowski, from the French edition: *Les trois Europes*, Paris 1985.

some respects, Russia has always been one step behind Europe. According to this view, the historical boundaries of Europe correspond more or less to the geographical boundaries: in both cases it would be the Eastern border of the European part of the Russian Empire.<sup>14</sup> The second approach emphasises mainly the power and uniqueness of Russia. Russia is a subcontinent that belongs neither to Asia nor to Europe, which can become a bridge between them. In this approach the Eastern border of the European community has always been the Western border of Russia.<sup>15</sup> This is very often associated with the religious element - the Orthodox religion. However, it is evident that the exclusion of Orthodox nations from Europe would be somewhat strange. In such a case, one would also have to exclude Greece - the cradle of European civilisation.

The debate over the Eastern boundary of Europe results mainly from the fact that for many centuries there was no exact knowledge about the Eastern borders of the European plain. In 1730, Strahlenberg, a Swedish officer in Russian service, proposed that the border of Europe be removed from the Don further to the East to the Ural Mountains and the Ural River. Later in the eighteenth century, the Russian government ordered the placing of border stones separating Europe from Asia.<sup>16</sup> This act established the traditional geographical understanding of Europe from the Atlantic to the Ural.

In summing up, it can be observed that Europe is not a "natural fact" but rather a particular intellectual form.<sup>17</sup> It should be stressed that "Europe" is a relatively new concept. It replaced the earlier concept of "Christendom". In the early phase of the Enlightenment, the conflict-torn Europe needed a more neutral concept. The concept of the European community began to predominate in popular European consciousness over the earlier conception of a Christian community.<sup>18</sup> Voltaire described Europe as a kind of immense republic divided into many states: some with monarchical, others with mixed systems, [...] but all of them corresponding to one another. All of them are based on the common religion, even if they differ with respect to denomination; all are governed by the same principles of public laws and policy of which other parts of the world remain ignorant.<sup>19</sup>

Europe always had some centre and a number of extensive peripheries. Particular European regions have much in common. They are all inhabited by peoples of mainly Indo-European culture, mostly racially related. They are joined by the common heritage of Christianity. They are linked together by all kinds of

<sup>14</sup> O. Halecki, *Historia...*, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

<sup>15</sup> O. Halecki, *Historia...*, p. 91.

<sup>16</sup> N. Davis, *Europa*, trans. E. Tabakowska, Kraków 2000, p. 32.

<sup>17</sup> W. J. Burszta, *Dwie Europy*, [in:] *Dylematy tożsamości europejskiej pod koniec drugiego tysiąclecia*, ed. J. Mucha and W. Olszewski, Toruń 1997, p. 42.

<sup>18</sup> N. Davis, *Europa*, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>19</sup> Voltaire, *Le Siecle de Luis XIV.Paxyz* 1840, p. 6, [in:] N. Davis, *Europa*, *op. cit.*, p. 31.



political, economic, and cultural relations. Their fundamental unity is equally evident as their evident diversity.<sup>20</sup> According to Oskar Halecki: Europe is a community of all nations which in the favourable conditions of a small but highly diversified continent adopted and developed the heritage of Greek-Roman civilisation transformed and enriched by Christianity, thanks to which free peoples from outside the borders of the former empire gained access to the eternal values formed in Antiquity.<sup>21</sup>

#### THE BORDERS OF EUROPEAN CIVILISATION

According to Jan Kieniewicz, the space of civilisation is a set of signs unambiguously defining identity, i.e. signs necessary and sufficient for the autonomous existence of civilisation. It is man-made space and so its dimensions are changeable. However, it is always connected with a system of values which is necessary for the existence and reproduction of relations. Cultural boundaries are very dynamic. Thus they cannot be treated as stable or permanent.

I believe that in defining the boundaries of European civilisation one could rely on some sub-criteria such as religion, values, power (historical), language, laws, consciousness. Some of these criteria may overlap.

#### THE CRITERION OF RELIGION

As Norman Davis rightly argues the geographical conception of Europe always had to compete with the conception of Europe as a cultural community. According to him, in the absence of common political structures, European civilisation could be defined only on the basis of cultural criteria. Special significance is usually assigned to the key role of Christianity which continued to be performed after the label of "Christianity" had been abandoned.<sup>22</sup> Christianity, the religion which conquered the Roman Empire, was in fact of Eastern origin and had no roots in the European past. However, Christianity adapted very well to new conditions. It did not try to fight the Roman Empire as a political organism or replace it. It regarded itself as a supernatural community, a state of the world to come.<sup>23</sup> According to Bishop Józef Życiński, who analysed the pronouncements of John Paul II, the magic power of institutions cannot form the foundations of the European unity. These foundations are to be searched

---

<sup>20</sup> N. Davis, *Europa, op. cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>21</sup> O. Halecki, *Historia Europy, op. cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>22</sup> N. Davis, *Europa, op. cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>23</sup> Ch. Dawson, *Tworzenie się Europy*, trans. J. W. Zielińska, Warszawa 2000, p. 39.

for in spiritual ties - in Christianity - in the Gospel.<sup>24</sup> T. S. Eliot also appealed to the Christian core of Europe: *The dominant force in creating a common culture between peoples each of which has its distinct culture, is religion [...] I am talking about the common tradition of Christianity which has made Europe what it is, and about the common cultural elements which this Christianity has brought with it [...] It is in Christianity that our arts have developed; it is in Christianity that the laws of Europe have - until recently - been rooted. It is against a background of Christianity that all our thought has significance. An individual European may not believe that the Christian faith is true, and yet what he says, and makes, and does, will all spring out of his heritage of Christian culture and depend upon that culture for its meaning. Only a Christian culture could have produced a Voltaire or a Nietzsche. I do not believe that the culture of Europe could survive the complete disappearance of the Christian Faith.*<sup>25</sup>

On the other hand, the integrating factor may sometimes turn out to be a factor of disintegration. For Montserrat Guibernau the identification of the cultural boundaries of Europe determined by religion poses two fundamental problems. First, is the appeal to a shared religion a recent invention? Were Charles the Great and the crusaders convinced that the religious beliefs divided between those who believed in the Christian God and those who did not was to reflect a future division between Europeans and the rest? Probably not. In addition, early Europe as Christendom already contained significant religious minorities (Jews and Muslims) - and it barely included the rural masses, whose peasant status was closely linked with a "pagan" (and thus non-Christian) outlook that presented a constant challenge to the consolidation of regional Christian realm. Second, if we were to assume that religion, and Christianity in particular, is the key criterion for inclusion in Europe, what do we make of the religious wars fought between European countries since the Middle Ages?<sup>26</sup>

However, it seems evident that many of the activities are based on common values rooted in the Christian tradition transplanted and adapted to European conditions.

---

<sup>24</sup> J. Życiński, *Europejska Wspólnota Ducha. Zjednoczona Europa w nauczaniu Jana Pawła II*, Warszawa 1998, p. 37.

<sup>25</sup> T. S. Eliot, *The unity of European culture; appendix to notes toward the definition of culture*, London 1948, p. 122-124, [in:] N. Davis, *Europa, op. cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>26</sup> M. Guibernau, *Unity and diversity in Europe*, [in:] *Governing European Diversity*, ed. M. Guibernau, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi 2001, p. 8.

## THE CRITERION OF VALUES

What are European values? According to Leon Dyczewski the uniqueness of European culture is testified to by:

- a) Personalist view of individual and social life; situating man in the centre of the system of values.
- b) Strong desire to grasp the essence of human existence.
- c) Desire of constant cognition, cognitive curiosity, and improvement of cognitive process.
- d) Love of freedom and personal dignity.
- e) Will to transform oneself, society, and nature, which involves the introduction of the categories of change and progress.
- f) Creative altruism manifesting itself in caring for other people and their lives, establishing specialised institutions for that purpose.
- g) The present tendency among the Europeans to move away from materialist to post-materialist values.<sup>27</sup>

A human individual is an important European value. Individual honour occupied the central position in the system of value. European values are largely Christian values. In his speeches, Pope John Paul II very often stresses the need of preserving moral values because forgetting about them may lead to conflicts between generations and axiological vacuum. Values are undoubtedly a factor integrating the European continent. Evidently, Western Europe cannot make exclusive claims to being European. Eastern Europe, subjected to many years of political oppression, is more European and more attached to the values that the rich inhabitants of the West play down, regarding them as self-evident.<sup>28</sup> It is very often stressed that the expansion of Europe (meaning the UE) will produce very positive effects. I will infuse European institutions with a new spirit and bring about a return to traditional values. For example, what values can Poland bring into a common Europe? Undoubtedly, these would be Christian values, hospitality, spirit of tolerance. The unity of European culture is the end product of thousands years of toil of our different forefathers; it is the heritage that we can abandon at our peril, and it would be a crime to deprive the younger ones and the future generations of it.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> L. Dyczewski, *Kultura europejska a kultura narodowa*, [in:] *Europa jutra*, ed. P. Kosłowski, Lublin 1994, p. 45-46.

<sup>28</sup> N. Davis, *Europa, op. cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>29</sup> H. Seton-Watson, *What Is Europe, Where Is Europe? From Mystique to Politique*, lecture delivered at the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London on 23 April 1985. Published in *Encounter*, July/August 1985, p. 17, after N. Davis, *Europa, op. cit.*, p. 40.

---

### THE CRITERION OF POWER

Since the times of Athenian democracy until the present times, power and the way it has been exercised exerted an undoubtedly major influence on the shape of Europe. It is necessary to stress here such elements as the distinction between state and society, separation of the spiritual from the secular, and the ideological from the political domain. Human dignity has been an element of political relations in Europe since the feudal times. Freedom is a political value. The concept of "Europe" comprises political substance. For many politicians "Europe" has been and continues to be an ideal to be realised. This would involve the reconstruction of Europe starting with the very basis. After the First World War the promotion of the idea of Europe led to the establishment of the League of Nations. After the Second World War, after the appearance of the Iron Curtain, the idea of Europe was promoted by politicians who wanted to create a little Europe in the West. The end of the bipolar division of the world gave rise to hopes for the construction of Pan-European community. However, the ideal of "Europe" seems rather fragile. This has been noticed not only by its opponents but also by its followers. In 1876, Bismarck argued that Europe is a "geographical concept". Seventy years later Jean Monnet admitted that "Europe has never existed. It has to be created".<sup>30</sup>

### THE CRITERION OF LANGUAGE

Europe is highly diversified in terms of language. There are three main language families: Germanic, Romance, and Slavonic languages. At present, it is essential to cultivate one's native language. Language gives the sense of identity and belonging to a particular social group. In Europe, the role of lingua franca used to be played by Latin, recently that role has to some extent been taken over by English. What is at stake is not the creation of a common language. This may lead to a situation in which, sooner or later, there will be another Tower of Babel in Europe. The idea is to promote multilinguality, without favouring any leading language, because linguistic imbalance may turn out to be a major obstacle to integration.

### THE CRITERION OF LAW

Generally, legislation is national in nature. However, there are supranational traditions in the conceptualisation of law and legal thought as well as in the division of competencies among courts in the execution of laws. Moreover, legal integration constitutes at present an important part of the process of European integration.

---

<sup>30</sup> N. Davis, *Europa, op. cit.*, p. 3\$.

## THE CRITERION OF AWARENESS

The question of European identity is very important. European identity is to encompass all inhabitants of the European continent. What is the role of the past and the present in creating the European identity? On the one hand, common cultural heritage is the basis of European awareness. But Europe has also experienced wars as well as political conflicts and divisions, which undoubtedly has their effect on European awareness. The present will also influence the sense of European identity. The European society inhabiting a common territory, consisting of many ethnic-national identities, speaking many languages, living in different economic conditions should find the ways of subduing possible conflicts by reconstructing the basis of a common identity on which supranational structures are to be built.<sup>3</sup> At this point it seems appropriate to quote the words of Massimo d'Azeglio, when he made the following comment on the unification of Italy in 1870: *We have made Italy: now we must make Italians.*<sup>32</sup> Common identity is thus what the integrating Europe needs.

Thus, Europe is a highly ambiguous concept in geographical, historical, political, and cultural terms. It is undoubtedly an intellectual form rather than a natural fact, which is connected with the fact that European borders have always been very unstable, and so difficult to define. The existence of Europe will largely depend on the formation of a common European identity which will become a factor of integration, despite the diversity of the continent.

## STRESZCZENIE

Pytanie o Europę nabiera obecnie bardzo istotnego znaczenia, przede wszystkim ze względu na procesy integracyjne. Kogo możemy zaliczyć do Europy, a kogo z niej wykluczyć? Gdzie Europa się zaczyna, a gdzie kończy? Jakie są jej granice? Jakie czynniki łączą, a jakie dzielą Europę? Czy Europę można zatem traktować jako jedność kulturową, która byłaby podstawą zjednoczenia? Jakie kryteria mogą określać europejską przestrzeń kulturową?

W literaturze przedmiotu pojawia się wiele koncepcji i wizji Europy. W artykule wyróżniono dwa zasadnicze kryteria: geograficzne i cywilizacyjne, przy pomocy których autorka podjęła się próby określenia europejskiej przestrzeni kulturowej.

Przestrzeń geograficzna Europy w świadomości Europejczyków zawsze pozostawała niedookreślona, chwiejna i zmienna. Zmieniała się niejednokrotnie w wyniku najazdów i okresowych

<sup>3</sup> R. Suchocka, *Europejska tożsamość jako przedmiot naukowej dyskusji*, [in:] *Oblicza europejskiej tożsamości*, Poznań 2001, p. 16-17.

<sup>32</sup> Ch. Shore, *Building Europe. The Cultural Politics of European Integration*, London, New York 2000, p. 18.

podbojów ze strony ludów nieeuropejskich, z drugiej zaś strony -te narody europejskie, które dotarły do geograficznych granic kontynentu, kontynuowały kolonizację poza tymi granicami. Najbardziej kontrowersyjna pozostaje granica na Wschodzie.

Przestrzeń cywilizacyjna wg Jana Kieniewicza to zbiór znaków jednoznacznie określających tożsamość, a więc niezbędnych i wystarczających do autonomicznego istnienia cywilizacji. Ludzie tworzą tę przestrzeń przez co jej wymiary są zmienne. Zawsze natomiast wiąże się ona z systemem wartości, który jest niezbędny do istnienia i odtwarzania więzi.

Przestrzeń cywilizacyjną można próbować określić przy pomocy takich podkryteriów, jak: religia, wartości, tożsamość, język, historia, prawo.

Europa to pojęcie bardzo wieloznaczne, pod względem geograficznym, historycznym, politycznym i kulturowym. Jest to na pewno bardziej forma intelektualna, niż fakt naturalny, gdyż granice Europy były i są bardzo chwiejne i zmienne, a co za tym idzie trudne do określenia. Istnienie Europy w dużym stopniu będzie zależało od wytworzenia wspólnej tożsamości europejskiej, która pomimo zróżnicowania kontynentu będzie czynnikiem integrującym.