



Cultural Diversity and Security Culture in the European Union

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Abstract: Cultural diversity and security culture have become important topics on the agenda of state and non-state actors, contributing to the achievement and maintenance of social cohesion, to the opening of prospects for resolving conflict situations and to the restoration of peace and security. The European Union has become a multi-ethnic, multi-racial and multicultural space, where the two concepts - cultural diversity and security culture, have become very important topics in theory and practice. Joining and scientifically approaching to the cultural diversity and security culture in the European Union is a complex and interesting endeavor. For the present research, however, we will focus on two objectives: highlighting the importance of cultural diversity and security culture within the European Union and presenting actions of the European Union with the aim of promoting cultural diversity and developing security culture. In this sense, the scientific research methodology mainly included observation, document analysis and comparative analysis. The article contributes to awareness of the importance of cultural diversity and security culture in the European Union in the present century, even more so as threats to security have diversified and amplified; also, this article can be a useful resource for professors, researchers, students, etc., whose scientific research activity has as its subject the proposed theme.

Keywords: cultural diversity; security culture; European Union; common security culture, actions

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1. Introduction

The European Union, an economic and political union between 27 European countries, is home to 446.8 million inhabitants¹, but also to their historical and cultural heritage. Cultural diversity and security culture have become, for a long time within the Union, important topics in various environments (academic, political, social, cultural, etc.). Through the motto of the Union - *Unity in diversity*, it is highlighted that diversity is not an obstacle to the cooperation and unity of the states, but on the contrary it is a source of wealth and creation, an advantage that contributes to unity and progress. An important regional and international actor, the European Union makes permanent efforts to preserve cultural heritage and promote cultural diversity, promoting, among other things, collaboration between national governments and that between governments and international organizations, but also for the development of the common security culture and that of its member states. Due to the strong link between culture and the identity of peoples, the destruction of cultural heritage and the violation of human rights (including cultural ones) are aggravating factors in conflicts and major obstacles to dialogue, peace and reconciliation.

2. Conceptual Clarifications

Cultural diversity refers to the existence, coexistence, and permanent interaction between different cultures within the same geographical space; this concept is closely related to the meanings of cultural identity, interculturality and multiculturalism, which involves contact between different languages, ethnic groups, religions, artistic expressions, values, gastronomy, worldviews, etc.

In the document “UNESCO’s Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity” (adopted in Paris, November 2, 2001), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) attributes to cultural diversity, a triple connotation: *“common heritage of humanity; indispensable requirement of sustainable development; source of exchange, innovation and creativity, (...) as necessary for humanity as biodiversity is for nature”*. According to the same

¹ On January 1, 2022, the population of the European Union was estimated at 446.8 million inhabitants, 172,000 less than in 2021, according to the website, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Population_and_population_change_statistics, accessed on 18.10.2022.

document (Article 4), “*the defense of cultural diversity is an ethical imperative, inseparable from respect for human dignity.*” At the international level, a series of actions are carried out to promote cultural diversity; among these is the *World Day for Cultural Diversity, for Dialogue and Development*, celebrated annually on May 21, marked by various initiatives (meetings, round tables, seminars, etc.).

For the European Union, respecting the cultural and linguistic diversity of its peoples is one of its main objectives. According to the Treaty of Lisbon (art. 167), “*The Union contributes to the flourishing of the cultures of the member states, respecting their national and regional diversity and highlighting, at the same time, the common cultural heritage*”¹. In accordance with the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union, in the context of cultural policy, the role of the European Union is one of support and complementarity, the direct responsibility in the field largely belonging to the member states.

Security culture is a concept resulting from the joining of the two terms - culture and security, which come from different spheres of activity; it is “*an interesting and attractive concept in multiple aspects - organizational, economic, technological, cultural and even military; (...) constituted by a set of information, attitudes, beliefs and values through which the individual relates to the political, military, cultural and economic system that characterizes society*” (Curoş, 2021, p. 44).

The important role of culture for resilience, peace and security is on the domestic and international agenda promoted by the European Union. Common dimensions and mutual knowledge of culture and security aspects are elements of European integration.

Within the European Union, two components of the security culture stand out: the national security culture (of each member state) and the common security culture.

The common security culture “*implies, at least, the gradual adoption of a common mentality for all the Member States of the Union*” (Howorth, 2002, p. 88). It is also the point of view presented by Nicole Gnesotto, the first director of the European Union Institute for Security Studies, who defined the common security culture as follows: “*the purpose and the means to activate a common thinking, compatible reactions, coherent analysis - in short, an increasingly European strategic culture*

¹ The treaty is available online on the website <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12016ME/TXT&from=RO>, accessed on 17.10.2022.

that transcends different cultures and national security interests” (Howorth, 2002). This definition finds its materialization in the progress made in the field of the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union.

An interesting approach to the common security culture in the European Union is presented by Monica Gariup: *“one could consider the culture of the European Union as the result of the addition of all national strategic cultures. This implies either convergence and/or unification: conflicting elements must be leveled and eliminated so that a common strategy can be identified; on the other hand, the security culture of the European Union can be considered the product of a multiplication: the product is represented by the common position/policy/culture”* (Gariup, 2016, p. 9).

Definitions of the security culture are formulated within the member states in various official documents, scientific research, etc. We mention a few without pretending to exhaust the examples.

In Romania, the National Defense Strategy of the country for the period 2015-2019 and the National Defense Strategy of the country for the period 2020-2024 operate with the following definition of the security culture: *“the totality of values, norms, attitudes or actions that determine understanding and assimilation to society level of the concept of security and its derivatives (national security, international security, collective security, insecurity, security policy, etc.); “it is a concept related to the need to learn to generate security, both as a citizen or community, and as a state - it is a problem of civilization, of humanity and, no less important, a condition of social normality.”* (National Defense Strategy Guide for the period 2015-2019, 2015)

An extended definition of security culture was formulated by Professor Marian Cieślarczyk, from Poland: *“security culture is a pattern of basic assumptions, values, standards, rules, symbols and beliefs that influence the perception of advantages, opportunities and (or) threats, the way to feel safety and to think about it, the way to act (cooperate) of the entities that is learned and articulated in the education processes, widely interpreted, including in the natural processes of internal integration and external adaptation, the organizational processes, as well as the process of strengthening defense broadly understood (not only military) that serve the relatively harmonious development of entities and their achievement of security, with benefits for them and for the environment”* (Piwowarski & Sopilnyk, 2015).

From Italy and Lithuania, the following definitions stand out: “*security culture can be defined as a set of strong and shared assumptions, beliefs and attitudes about security threats and reference objects*” (Gariup, 2016); “*security culture, a new concept in academic debates, is largely related to the changing security agenda and changing perspectives on national security, when it argues that the cultural elements of the global or domestic environment of states are decisive in explaining the interests, politics and the behavior of the national security of the states*” (Gariup, 2016, p. 41).

3. Actions of the European Union for the Promotion of Cultural Diversity and the Development of Security Culture

The importance of knowing cultural heritage and implicitly cultural diversity and promoting them is emphasized in various ways. For example, the 2017 Eurobarometer survey highlights the importance of cultural heritage: 88% of European citizens interviewed believe that Europe’s cultural heritage should be taught in schools, and 71% agree that living close to places related to cultural heritage of Europe can improve the quality of life; Professor Ludmila Lazăr is of the same opinion, according to which “*the recognition of cultural diversity and its valorization contributes to the facilitation of intercultural communication and represents an important aspect of European identity*” (Lazăr, 2017, p. 167).

The respect for cultural, religious and linguistic diversity has a legal basis (Treaty of Lisbon, Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union), within the Union a series of priorities and actions aimed at emphasizing the recognition, importance and need to value cultural diversity have been established. In order to strengthen the European identity and the feeling of common belonging and belonging to a cultural community, education and culture have a double quality: they represent the most important *vectors* and *the solution* to the challenges facing the Union, providing means to capitalize on the opportunities that provide these challenges¹.

¹ *Comunicarea Comisiei către Parlamentul European, Consiliu, Comitetul Economic și Social European și Comitetul Regiunilor, Consolidarea identității europene prin educație și cultură Contribuția Comisiei Europene la reuniunea liderilor din 17 noiembrie de la Göteborg/Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Strengthening European identity through education and culture The European Commission’s contribution to the*
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Within the European Union, there is European Culture, formed as a result of the actions of European institutions (the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the Court of Justice of the European Union, etc.), and *the Europe of cultures*, of the diversity of cultures, i.e. a combination of similarities and differences between the cultures of the European nations while respecting the national identity of the member states (Manole & Popa, 2005).

European culture is identified by values developed over time; “*the only European culture, at least from our perspective, after trying various variants (Byzantine, Roman-Catholic, Italian, French, Anglo-Saxon, the last two on a Germanic background), opened, through historical consciousness, towards all cultures known*” (Noica, 1993, p. 27).

The Europe of cultures represents a mosaic of languages (the 24 official languages of the European Union are an essential part of the cultural heritage; multilingualism being one of the founding principles of the EU) and diverse cultures that have influenced each other and have been enriched by throughout the centuries, offering a common cultural heritage.

The steps taken to promote cultural diversity are numerous. To enumerate them chronologically would require more space, so in this article we will present a few.

Under the auspices of 2018 - *the European Year of Cultural Heritage* (officially launched on the occasion of the European Forum of Culture on 7 December 2017, in Milan) a series of actions were carried out at European, national, regional and local level that contributed to awareness of the importance and the contribution of cultural heritage for sustainable economic and social development.

Another important initiative that highlights cultural richness and diversity is *the European Capitals of Culture* initiative, which contributes to the cultural, social and economic development of many cities and regions in the European Union.

Among the initiatives is the “*Creative Europe*” Program 2014-2020, a unique platform for the coordinated and constructive support given to the 645 European

leaders’ meeting on 17 November in Gothenburg, available online on the website <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017DC0673&from=LV>, accessed on 04.10.2022.

cultural cooperation projects¹ that have contributed to the strengthening of cultural and linguistic diversity. For the period 2021-2027, this Program has a budget of 2.44 billion euros (by comparison, the previous program (2014-2020) had 1.47 billion euros)², to fulfill the two objectives: protecting, developing and promoting diversity and European cultural and linguistic heritage and increasing the competitiveness and economic potential of the cultural and creative sectors, especially the audiovisual sector.

The statistical information provided by Eurostat's culture database (such as European Union Culture Statistics, Eurostat Guide to Culture Statistics or various studies) contributes to the identification of effective measures to support the cultural sectors and to develop relevant policies of of the Union, constituting another approach worthy of mention.

A relevant approach is the awarding of prizes in the fields of cultural heritage, architecture, literature and music, which highlight the value and rich cultural diversity of the European Union and the importance of intercultural dialogue and cross-border cultural activities.

Promoting cultural diversity through *international cultural relations* is an important part of the Union's role as a global actor. The European Union and all its Member States have acceded to the "2005 UNESCO Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions", a document that serves as a framework for the Union's policy on culture in its external relations, including trade relations and development cooperation. Collaboration with international organizations, such as UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, to combat the illicit traffic of cultural goods and promote local development through culture, is a major step to protect cultural diversity.

The security culture raises awareness of the security issues of the European Union and each member state, its purpose being to prepare citizens to contribute to the protection of national and European values in the face of various threats. In any of its components (common security culture and national security culture), the development of the security culture requires an inter-institutional approach.

¹ *Romania in creative Europe projects, culture, results 2014-2020*, available online on the website <https://www.europa-creativa.eu/Files/pliant%20EC%202019%20Rezultate%202020.pdf>, accessed on 21.10.2022.

² According to the website <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/ro/creative-europe/about-the-creative-europe-programme>, accessed on 21.10.2022.

Efforts to theorize aspects of shared security culture are ongoing. If in the past national approaches to geostrategic issues were shaped by national history and geography, after 1989, together with the adoption by the European Union of some common strategies (for example: the “European Security Strategy”, adopted in 2003, which established, for the first time, clear principles and objectives for the promotion of the European Union’s security interests based on its fundamental values; the “Global Strategy for Foreign Policy and Security”, adopted in 2016, which constitutes the governing framework of the Union’s external action on medium and long term), were shaped by experiences and lessons learned.

The EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), an integral part of the CFSP, are eloquent examples of the materialization of a common security culture.

An important step for the common security culture is the introduction of the concept of *European identity* on the political agenda in 1973, with the adoption of the “Declaration on European Identity”, at the Copenhagen summit, and subsequently developed in numerous scientific researches; at the same time, it is also an essential element in the evolution of the political dimension of the Union, which consists in adding to the national identity a feeling of belonging to the European community.

Another effort to support the development of a common security culture is *the European Cyber Security Month* - October 2019, with the aim of raising awareness of cyber security threats and promoting cyber security among citizens and organizations through education and through the exchange of good practices¹.

The establishment of *the European Union Institute for Security Studies* (2002) with the aim of laying the foundations for a common security culture is another important step; the actions and publications of this institute strengthen the analytical capacity of the Union and contribute to shaping common approaches on topics related to foreign policy and security and defense policy.

For the development of a common security culture within the European Union and for the Union to remain, alongside the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, a credible provider of security for its member states, Clara Marina o’Donnell is of

¹ *European Cybersecurity Month: EU promotes security culture among citizens*, available online on the website <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/european-cybersecurity-month-eu-promotes-security-culture-among-citizens>, accessed on 20.10.2022.

the opinion that the member states of the Union should work to overcome an older problem - the division between its western and eastern members¹.

About the security culture of the member states of the Union, many specialized works mention the fact that it is developing; we will exemplify the following:

In Romania, “*the security culture has developed a pattern, characterized by four features: wisdom, active adaptation, realism and experience; (...) the stage differences, (...) were the ones that constantly created added value and brought the “smart nation” paradigm to Romania as well*”². Measuring national security culture has been the focus of academic and public attention. In the absence of a dedicated tool for its measurement, the various concerns for measuring the public perception of some security topics are noted; we exemplify, in this sense, *the Security Culture Barometer from 2018*, in which the security culture was described based on some variables (socio-demographic, information sources, internet access, account on social networks, vote).

On Lithuania’s security culture, Margarita Seselgyte mentions that it is “*in the process of transformation*”³.

The National Security Strategy of Croatia (2017) provides, as an objective, the development of the security culture, meaning that, along with the voluntary military training program, training programs and activities are introduced that will contribute to the development of the security culture of the population and the strengthening of awareness of the fact that security and participation in the defense of the country are the right and obligation of every citizen and the entire community⁴.

Spain’s National Security Strategy (2011) contains a section on security culture, which emphasizes the support of security education for the development of security culture.

¹ Clara Marina o’Donnell, *Can Europeans share a common security culture?*, available online on the website <https://www.cer.eu/insights/can-europeans-share-common-security-culture>, accessed on 24.10.2022

² *Cum ne apără cultura de securitate/ How our security culture protects us*, available online on the website <https://intelligence.sri.ro/cum-ne-apara-cultura-de-securitate/>, accessed on 21.10.2022.

³Margarita Seselgyte, *op.cit.*, p.40.

⁴ Republic of Croatia, *National Security Strategy*, available online on the website <https://www.soa.hr/files/file/National-Security-Strategy-2017.pdf>, accessed on 21.10.2022.

In Belgium, the National Security Plan (2022-2025) mentions the need for the contribution of each institution and citizens to avoid security problems, based on the idea that “*different complementary links make the whole stronger*”¹.

4. Conclusions

The concepts of cultural diversity and security culture present many challenging and interesting opportunities for scientific research.

Cultural diversity, freedom, tolerance, equality and solidarity are common values of European Union citizens; cultural diversity is both an asset and a strength of the Union.

The security culture in the European Union has two coordinates: the common security culture and the security culture of its member states; every coordinate of the security culture must be a space of civilization and democracy. The evolution of the two coordinates is based, among other factors, on the developments in the domestic and international security environment.

There are many more examples of the European Union’s efforts to promote cultural diversity and the development of security culture; the article did not manage to cover all the approaches nor all the scientific approaches within the European Union regarding cultural diversity and security culture.

New asymmetric threats, global problems, increasing interdependence between states, etc. are sources of insecurity for everyone. It should be noted that the consistent theoretical and practical efforts within the European Union and its member states are intended to highlight the importance of promoting cultural diversity and the development of security culture, of the awareness of the involvement of each citizen in their promotion activities.

¹ *Plan National de Sécurité/ National Security Plan 2022-2025*, available online on the website <https://www.police.be/5998/sites/5998/files/files/2022-04/PNS2022-2025.pdf>, accessed on 24.10.2022.

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