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# Eastern Orthodoxy and European Union

A Clash of Norms

(An Orthodox Approach)

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## **Abstract**

Religion is a subject of controversial importance in the field of international relations. Even though Europe has Christian roots, and European Union concept was based on Christian Democracy, the genuine Christian values are not of great importance for the EU integration. The aim of this study is to examine which are the historical and political factors that provoked the Christian dogma's transformation and led to a Europe shaped by modern religious features. Orthodoxy's values are different from the ones of EU, in some aspects the two doctrines do not correspond to each other, and the differences conduct to a clash of norms. Eastern Orthodox Church is still firm in promoting the true Christian moral values and Eastern Orthodoxy is the only remained part of the Christian dogma that did not degenerated from the original tradition. The study explains that Christianity underwent an immense transformation under the history, and its latest form of pluralistic churches dominated by Protestant values, is the shape that fits better the EU values.

Keywords: integration, European Union, religion, East European Orthodoxy, western values

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. The subject of the study

In the early times, the European continent was just an amalgam of civilizations with different background and historical influences. The Nordic, Mediterranean, Celtic, Traces and Caucasian cultures reunited under the Roman tiara, led later to a Europe of civilizations. After the first Ecumenical Synod (325 Nicea), which declared as legal the Christian religion and its practices in the Roman Empire, one could say that started the creation of a first “European Christian Civilization”. With the Schism of 1054, the European Christian World divided in two parts: Catholic (Western part of Europe) and Eastern Orthodoxy (Southern and Western part of Europe), followed by a new religious division in the Western part during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, provoked by the appearance of the protestant sects. The religious multi-pluralism influenced the development of the European Civilization in a certain direction and weakened the idea of community. After the World War II bad experience and totally destroyed economy, Europe needed a common body that could reunite its’ countries and citizens under the same order. The first attempt, the European Coal and Steel Community (1951), developed later into European Union, officially established in 1993 by the Treaty of European Union.

The union’s aim was to bring Europe together again, in terms of common wealth, solidarity, safety, stability. In spite that the initiators of the European project Schuman, de Gasperi, Adenauer and Monet were Christian Democrats, the Union left apart the primordial Christian values, the Orthodox ones. Orthodoxy was not considered important variable to play any important for Europe’s new form of development. EU was

a common vision, with a selective character and had from the beginning western and Christian Democratic features. (Thomas 2005) When speaking about human beings and civil societies, three levels should be taken into consideration. The first one is of theological nature and illustrates one's personal, individual relation with God, the second level is anthropological and should refer to one's social relations on a community scale and the last one has a cosmological nature and regards one's relations with the entire world. In the biblical perspective, all three levels interact with each other and the first one is considered the base for the development of a correct social order. The modern society ignores the theological coordinate and is concerned only about the local and international ones. Between others, two features characterize the contemporaneous society: (i) a bizarre interference of individualistic and humanistic attitudes and (ii) a negation or indifference about one nation historical roots. A tendency of homogenization and standardization paves the road through a successfully EU structure.

## 1.2. The Purpose and the Aim of the Study

The European Community is much more than a geographical space; it is an equilibrium center, a European mentality, a common fate, a collective entity. According to the Christian standards, a viable community is founded on love and tolerance in spite all the continuous external or internal provocations. Another important aspect regarding a functioning society or community is religion's stimulus to construct or re-construct relations between the individuals, relations based on free will, equality, respect and compassion. The idea of a federal Europe limited from the beginning the free will coordinate since the Union's decisions are taken on a general level and the individual has no other choice than to follow them. Even though most of the above orthodox features are fulfilled in the space of European Union, one can observe that sometimes problems can appear.

The Union's enlargement process gives place to appearance of some paradoxes. On the one hand, the unified Europe militates for the protection of its origins and its states' cultural uniqueness. On the other hand, the European integration supposes fluffiness of general criteria, which involve changes at local levels and destroy the originality and the unique character of cultures. Another contradiction about the EU integration process is that in spite of the fact that the membership implies the operation of general norms, which sometimes bring compulsory changes on local level, more, and more countries declare their interest in joining the Union. It seems that, European states are more interested in a better welfare than in conserving their own civilization.

Harmonization and standardization among the member states are general lines to follow and implement. In some cases, the local-national norms and their driving forces are enough strong to delay or hinder the implementation of some general norms. One example is the case of religion, which after a long period of absence from the international relation's arena, is back from the "exile". Sometimes, the church or groups of believers disagree with some of the changes proposed by EU, and most of the times the argumentation refers to violation of ethical-moral norms. The EU enlargement rules and the implementation of certain European norms sometimes provoke reactions of East European Orthodox Church<sup>1</sup>.

The aim of the study is to deeper investigate if these reactions could possible strengthen East European Orthodoxy's status in Europe. According to some scholars, after a long exclusion from the international relations seems that religion is back again. (Petito and Hatzopoulos 2003, Scott 2005) My aim is to have a look at the resurgence of East European Orthodoxy in Europe and to study an actual issue, namely the European integration in the light of Orthodox theology. The main questions of the study are:

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<sup>1</sup> As for instance the Greek debate in the beginning of '90s about the implementation of new type of ID cards that took national proportions and newly the compulsory implementation of Biometric Passports until 2012, in all European Union's countries

1. Which are the historical and political factors that imposed the Christian religion's transformation in Europe?
2. Which are the EU norms that do not correspond to the Orthodox doctrine?

### 1.3. The Plan of the Study

The thesis will have as main- universal idea, the concept of integration in particular will examine the case of European Union. In order to conduct a convincing analysis of the integration phenomenon in connection to an Orthodox reality, I consider needed to explain in Chapter 2 what EU integration involves, the Copenhagen Criteria's importance for the enlargement process and the societal image of Europe. In chapter 3, I will try to clarify what exactly means East European Orthodoxy and its formation. I will perform that step by mentioning the most significant moments in Orthodoxy's history, the impact of the Great Schism of 1054 and the importance of Orthodoxy's values for a moral society. Another aim of this chapter is to underline the differences between the terms "Eastern" and "Western" Europeanism in terms of religious believe. In this part of the study I will analyse the status of the Orthodox Church within the state during the history. In chapter 4, I have a closer look to of the role that Ecumenical Movement played in the change of Christianity at international and European level. Chapter 6 is an analysis of "the clash of norms between Orthodoxy and EU" and chapter 7 summarizes the conclusion.

## 1.4. Methodology

Because the materials used in this study will be mainly books and articles written by different fields' authors, I plan to use the *argumentationsanalys method* as an overall approach for the paper. I am not interested in making any new scientifically discoveries with my study, but rather my intention is to point out the existence of a clash of norms between the EU and East European Orthodoxy. As long as I could not find an exact English translation of the term *argumentationanalys*, and the books I will use in order to explain it are written in Swedish language, I will keep referring to it in its original form. Argumetationsanalys is a technique that assists the writer to develop a study based on other text's interpretation. The argumentation must illustrate a rational way of using the texts as tools in order to lead to the expected study's result. According to Bergström and Boreus argumetationsanalys it is a process that implies two aspects: to argue means to fight and the arguments are the buidnings.<sup>2</sup> They stand that this method is a significant tool to use for studies made in the social science field. (Bergström and Boreus, 2000: 142-144)

Personally, I have choused this method because my aim is to write a paper with a critical content and to underline a problem that occurs during the development of EU enlargement, namely the clash of norms between two institutions, or ideologies: EU and Orthodoxy. For the reason that I came from an Orthodox country I can say that lately the international arena has faced a clear tendency of religion's revival and resurgence in the Eastern part of Europe (especially in the post-communist countries, which are by majority Orthodox). Probably the clash would never occur if some of these countries did ask for and become members of the EU. However, here I want to underline that my study aims to be an Orthodox approach of the problem, and that I intend to bring up points that can be considered as a criticism towards EU and the modern society's shape. The purpose of choosing this method is to try to analyze on which exactly bases appear the differences between East European Orthodoxy and EU.

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<sup>2</sup> "...att argumentera är att kriga respektive argumentationer är byggnader."



## 1.5. Concepts and Theory

For the reason that this paper will treat the clash of norms between EU demands and the values of Orthodoxy, which is underlined by the European integration process, I believe that some definitions of the central concepts, integration and religion, must be made.

The term *integration*, originates from the Latin language *integro-are*, meaning to put together, to complete/ supplement many parts in one unitary whole. The definition given by Cambridge Learner's Dictionary, is even more specific. The verb "to integrate" is described with two particular classifications: about people-"to become part of a group or society" and regarding things/ ideas-to" combine two or more things to make something more effective".<sup>3</sup> Apart of its use in many fields (as for instance economical or territorial), the term "integration" is often mentioned in a sociological context in order to designate a close interdependence between the members of a society, the union of multiple entities or different groups. The contemporaneous international integration phenomenon is one of the main features of the global society. Inter-governmental treaties, international organizations with an integrationist character and the compulsoriness of general rules' implementation, reflect a high level of interdependence between the members of a community. In the case of European integration, general regulations are to be followed by the member countries, in the name of effectiveness, unification and standardization.

*Religion* is the other principal concept used in this paper and its etymology is still disputed. Lactantius claimed that it comes from the Latin word *religare*= re (again)-ligare (bind, connect), Cicero argued that it is originated from the re-ligare= re (again)-lego(chose, go over again, consider carefully)<sup>4</sup> and the modern interpretation from the 13<sup>th</sup> century mentions it as based on the Latin *religio*, which explain it as certain practices in connection to a deity. Except of a basic explanation for the world's creation and the main kind's roots, religion has two main characteristics: the belief in a divine power and the following of moral norms. Many definitions of religion have been formulated, but

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<sup>3</sup> [http://dictionary.cambridge.org/define.asp?key=HW\\*18000504&dict=CLD2](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/define.asp?key=HW*18000504&dict=CLD2)

<sup>4</sup> Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* (2, 72)

spite of their disagreements upon few points, one aspect is present all of them: religion's positive role as a societal bridge between individuals or states.

In order to explain the increasing importance of the church in the international arena, I intend to use as central theory the one presented by Petito and Hatsopoylos in their book "*Religion in international relations: the return from the exile*". The authors consider religion as a victim of the latest history, which was deliberately excluded from important decisions in the international agenda. The main reason that makes me believe that this theory is appropriate for my study is the authors' way to observe the historical transformation of religion. They underline two new coordinates which must to be considered in the religions tendency to re-become important for the international relations. The argumentation is that generally in all processes, an eventual "coming back" presupposes a change of the original form or ideology. The second assert is that the exile period often gives time and opportunity to the exiled to reconsider their initial pre-exile values.

When standing that religion returns in the center of international politics after a long absence, their theory assumes also that Christian ideology underwent a transformation. One of the aspects that I will try to underline is to show that for Europe, Christianity is more connected to the catholic doctrine. Another aspect is that in order to be eligible for the EU norms, Christianity have changed during the history and the religion's new suitable shape is a Western Catholic doctrine. In order to use Petito and Hatsopoulos' theory I will to try to make evident the need of East European Orthodoxy's values in political Europe nowadays. This will help me to underline the structural changes of Christianity, the misinterpretation of the genuine Christian doctrine in the Western Europe and explain the religion's role in the international relations.

## 2. European Union

### 2.1. EU short historical background

After the bad experience of the Two World Wars, the need of a new international order was obvious. The first attempt was the formation of Bretton Woods's system, which proposed a new way to combine financial international transactions with a broader trade scale and massive abroad investments.<sup>5</sup> Even though the system collapsed in 1971, its influence on the world order was clear: the economical interactions between the western states developed a more intense collaboration. (Keohane 1984, 1988) On regional level, the idea of a united Europe was rising after the end of the World War II. In 1951 established the European Coal and Steel Community, which aimed to secure peace between the nations, by bringing them into cooperation within the same institution. The body developed in what today is called the European Union. (1993 the Treaty of European Union)<sup>6</sup>The "grouping tendency" of European states accentuated during the process of liberalization of the principal European economies and this neo-liberal economical order was followed by the development of some local-regional mechanisms aimed to keep an eye on the strict multilateral and regional economical supervising. The concept of region has a specific use in the field of international relations and according to Hettne nowadays it refers to a "supranational subsystem of the international system". (Hettne 2005)

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<sup>5</sup> The Bretton Woods system of monetary management established rules for commercial and financial relations among the world major states, by setting up a system of rules, institutions and procedures to regulate the international monetary system.

<sup>6</sup> [http://europa.eu/abc/12lessons/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/abc/12lessons/index_en.htm)

## 2.2. The Modern International System

The idea of a united Europe as an amalgam of sovereign states, which unite in the name of power had another background idea: to develop an anti- American sovereign project. (Fukuyama 2004) According to Fukuyama, the end of the East-West competition and conflict “represented the triumph of the ideal state”. (Burchill et al, 2005:56) The increased importance of capital shaped a new type of collaboration between the units and, especially after the end of the Cold War, the unit’s supremacy and influence were not measurable any more in terms of military capability but in financial strength. The balance between the internal and the external weight changed and states became more aware about the importance of cooperation. “The anarchical nature of the international system tends to homogenize foreign policy behavior by socializing states into the system of power politics” .(Burchill et all, 2005: 57) The modern form of cooperation follows trends as “harmonizing” and “homogenizing”, relates to behavior and interaction, and develops in terms better-offs. The states tend to act in a “Machiavellian” way and to focus on practical, economical better-offs and leaving aside morality norms.

Gilpin claimed that the result of any hegemonic war is the creation of a new system, in which new economical, political and strategic standards are established. The good functioning of the system is based on the fruitful relations between the member states. Each government behaves in correlation with its strength: political or economical. In the actual international system, the power means financial capacity and influence. As Gilpin stands, the goal of the conflict “is the hierarchy of power and relations among the states in the system”. (Gilpin 2006: 264) The modern states have two characteristics: (i) the possibility to influence and get involved in the society and (ii) their sovereignty is recognized and considered juridical equivalent to other states. (Spruyt 2002) The contemporary international system is a modern type of “Westphalia system”. If in 1668 the Peace of Westphalia enumerated rules to follow between the states on an international scale, nowadays there are adapted on a regional level. The system’s characteristics today

are: (i) the importance of regional territorial integrity and (ii) the fact that in the international interests and goals of the nation states transcend those of the citizens or states. The interdependence is the secret of the latest system. Having the countries tied with each other, their sovereignty is weakened and all their decisions are influenced by the central rules. The good functioning of the system is based more on the big organizations' decisions and the obedience of every state to the leader, than the good cooperation between the units. Waltz explained the new de facto situation as that states nowadays "at minimum, seek their own preservation and, at maximum, drive for universal domination", which is the central aim of their behavior. (Burchill et al, 2005: 42) On the other hand, states developed and continue to develop, in order to be suitable to the latest international rules and needs, process that leads to a sort of influential development.

## 2.3. Enlargement and Copenhagen Criteria

The European Union is a unique case of a general interrelation of two processes: regionalization and the "free-trade" wave of globalization.<sup>7</sup> The contemporary globalization is a unique amalgam of political, juridical, military, cultural and demographical domains. (Ohmae 1991: 59) Nevertheless, the contemporary model of economical globalization reflects also a strong cumulative grouping tendency. (Bjorn 1993) In the case of European Union's widening, I tend to perceive the regionalization process as having aspects of what Keohane and Nye call the "complex asymmetrical interdependence". (Keohane and Nye 2006) The fulfillment of the Copenhagen Criteria is not an easy task for the un-eligible countries. Even when accepted as parts of the Union, the new members are dependent of EU economical help in order to improve their

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<sup>7</sup> Many scholars consider that in the history globalization came in three waves: (i) the colonization by European powers of the rest of the unknown world, (ii) postcolonial era and the transfer of the occidental western ideas to the non western ones and (iii) the actual era of "free trade". (Shiva in Lechner and Boli, 2008: 466)

infrastructure and industries. As mentioned above, integration has two results, to become part of a group or society and the combination of ideas, rules in the name of effectiveness. I think that, in fact, the EU integration process fulfils the above, but supposes as well another important variable, namely commitment. The idea to be in the same boat, named European Union is a matter of promises and commitments of both parts involved, but in practice, they have an unequal aspect. EU decides and judges the eligibility, eventually accepts the country in its borders and commits to support it. The country asks for the membership, is examined in conformity to the norms of Copenhagen Criteria and legally commits to support the aims of the Union.

After increasing request of European countries to become EU members, the union defined a set of rules to be fulfilled in order to achieve membership. The rules are known as The Copenhagen Criteria (1993) and mention that “by the time they join, new members must have:

- stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;
- a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union;
- *the ability to take on the obligations of membership, including support for the aims of the Union. They must have a public administration capable of applying and managing EU laws in practice.*”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> (From [http://europa.eu/abc/12lessons/lesson\\_3/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/abc/12lessons/lesson_3/index_en.htm))

# 3. East European Orthodoxy

## 3.1. Early History

From the very early times, the role of Christianity in the community was controversial, and I will mention below the most important transformations that it went through. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century Christianity was declared illegal and the reason was political afterwards the Christians denied the supremacy of the emperor and recognized-devoted themselves to a different sovereign, God.<sup>9</sup> (Fr Hopko1979: 120, Shmemann 1979: 31) The First Ecumenical Council (Nicea, 325) established the division of the Christian Church's order within the Roman Empire in three parts: Church of Rome (west part of the empire), the Church of Antioch (east part of the empire) and the Church of Alexandria (the African part). This was the first moment to mention in the process of Christianity's transformation under the historical and political influences. The council declared also that the bishop of Constantinople has a lower hierarchical grade than the one of Rome<sup>10</sup>. The statement changed after the Council of Chalcedon (451), which declared both churches equal<sup>11</sup>.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the Rome's fall into the Goths' hands marked the beginning of Christian World's decline in the west and gave to the Church of Constantinople the primacy in the Eastern Christianity. That was an important moment in Christianity's history, because by then the Orthodox Church gained the status of self-standing official

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<sup>9</sup> "Non licet esse christianos" meaning "Is not lawful to be a Christian"

<sup>10</sup> "...the bishop of Constantinople shall have the prerogative of honor after the bishop of Rome, because Constantinople is the New Rome". (Fr Hopko1979: 136)

<sup>11</sup> "equal privileges with the old imperial Rome" because the new capital city, Constantinople, was "honored with the emperor and the senate" (canon 28 of the Council of Chalcedon)

authority. At that moment, the two hierarchies in the Roman Empire were (i) the Church that covered the welfare and spiritual needs of the citizens and (ii) the state that ruled the political part. The recognition of Church's importance was seen as well as a measure that could provide a common line and unity between the empire's parts, unity that was a fertile ground for a general good cooperation. (Meyendorff 1966: 17-18)

In the late ninth century, two missionaries sent by the patriarch of Constantinople, started the evangelization of the Slavs. Bulgaria and the Serbian lands were first, and through the centuries, the process continued with Kiev and later on with a part of Russia. In the tenth century, the Tsar Boris the Bulgarian declared his Church as part of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Later in the same century, was established the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, which was the first serious step to ascertain the Orthodox faith in all Russia. During that period, the West Church had its first Pope of German origin (Gregory V) which reformed it and centralized the power of the Western Church, the papacy, in Rome.

### 3.2. The Schism

By 1052, a strong disagreement occurred between Constantinople and Rome, again regarding the papacy's primate in the Christian world. In 1053, the Pope made efforts to re-establish a decent cooperation (with the target of communion) between the Western and the Eastern Church, but the Patriarch of Constantinople (Michael Cerularius) refused his proposal. The result was the Great Schism of 1054, which is the second transformation of the original Christian Church. In 1095, the Pope Urban II inaugurated the crusades against the Eastern Church (Constantinople), crusades that were a sort of "ecclesiastical colonialism" and in 1204 under the Fourth Crusade, the Church of Constantinople was attacked. The Eastern Church remained under the "tiara of the pope" until 1261, but in 1282, the its bishops denied the supremacy of the Pope. (Papadakis and Meyendorf 1994)



In 1453, the Constantinople's fall in Turkish hands marked the end of the Byzantine Empire. For the reason that the Islamic norms were inappropriate for the Christians, the Ottomans decided to continue the operation of the Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul. The reason was purely institutional and the patriarchate had full decisive power in electing its own clergy, declared by law inviolable. That conducted to the development of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople (later Istanbul), into an institution in charge of Christian's education, juridical punishment and welfare. The Christians were a considered a religious minority and the Easter Church became "a state within the state". (Schmemmann 1977: 271-273, Meyendorff 1996: 75-82) With the end of Byzantium, the Turks took over the states of the former Byzantine Empire: Serbia (1459), Greece (1459), Bosnia (1463) and Egypt (1517) and exploit them for the next four hundred years. Even though the fall of Byzantine Empire restrained the power the Eastern Orthodox Church, after the enthroning of the Constantinople's patriarch, a revival of Eastern Orthodox Church's authority on the Slavic and Bulgarian churches it is mentioned. (Meyendorff 1996: 52-53) In the same time, another Orthodox power was rising up, the Russian Church and Moscow was proclaimed the "third Rome". (Sherrard 1996: 170). The Russian Orthodox Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches from Wallachia and Moldavia (parts of the later state of Romania) were the only part of the Eastern Orthodox communion which remained outside the control of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire controlled much of the Southeastern Europe (the area that they called the "Balkans") for four hundred years.

During the period of the two World Wars, were no significant changes that affected the status of East European Orthodoxy in Europe. A critical period started with the Communist era, and the organized secularization of the state. During the communism, the socialist doctrine by itself considered religion as unnecessary and planed its eradication by orthodox churches' demolition and persecution of Orthodox believers. During communism, the Orthodox Church was just an institution, which served the state and did not promote the "faith". (Meyendorff 1996: 111-128) However, the collision between Christianity and Marxism is of controversial result. It was not about of the triumph of the Marxism over Christianity, nor did it manage to eradicate the religion but only to show

that Christianity had over appreciated its power. (Jans 1998) The fact that the Orthodox Church was suppressed and believers were persecuted, it is a sign that shows that the communist leaders realized the power of religion and intentionally wanted to weaken it. Like during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, Christianity was considered again “illegal” on the base of political reasons.

As related above, the history of East European Church was not an easy-going one. In spite of the changes in status, power and influence, the East European Church did not change the genuine Christian doctrine. Nowadays, the Eastern Orthodoxy is the second largest Christian communion in the world (after the Roman Catholic Church) and is the main religion in many European countries. I will mention only the EU Orthodox countries Bulgaria (83%), Greece (98%), Romania (87%) and Cyprus (80%), in order to give to the reader a clearer image of the percentage of orthodox citizens inside the EU borders.

### 3.3. Orthodox Church

#### 3.3.1. Orthodox Church and society

As explained above, the practice of Orthodoxy has been officially restricted few times during the history, action based mainly on political matters. Nevertheless, what the restrictions did not manage to accomplish, was to eradicate the belief at the person's level. Most of the powers ignored that religion is an individual subject matter, which as most of the personal matters, increase in intensity with an eventual interdiction. On the other hand, even though most of the governments propose to the crowds the democratic liberty, the Church gives a moral direction of this liberty. When the state fails in human rights' issues (welfare, or other ones) the Church acts as a humanitarian body and covers

the individuals' practical and ideological needs. The state's failure in a paradox way strengthens the Church's status in the society.

The western modern society promotes an individualistic way of dealing with life and individuals and states are encouraged to act in a "Machiavellian" way. One's action consequences are judged in terms of legality and not in terms of morality. The human being, if ignoring Darwin's evolutionary theory, is a copy of God and not a type of modern animal, which implies that his nature and character are of good and moral temperament, as his creator. The fact that the modern society's circumstances has in a way "trained" the human being to be indifferent about the moral character of his actions, does not mean that the individual's conscience is comfortable with that. I believe that is not very absurd to considerate the Orthodox Church, as the only authority able to revive the real moral values in the modern society, assumption that I will develop this idea in a further chapter.

### 3.3.2. Orthodox Church and the State

Alexander Schmemmann classified in 1979 the development of historical relations between the Church and the state, in terms of governing, into three periods. The first one is a long period of conflict, which evolved within the Roman Empire that firstly rejected the ideas of Christianity on political bases, because Christians were denying slavery and other intentions of conquest. In other words, the Christian religion did not accept and agree with imperialism and colonialism. Any ideas or actions that could cause pain or unhappiness to other human beings were rejected by the Christian faith, which promoted understanding and help for others.

The second one he considered the period of "reconciliation" between the West and the East Churches, which led into the founding of Christian States (as for instance Bulgaria, Serbia and Russia). The Byzantium consideration as the "holy state" developed

the concept of “Byzantine Theory” and its spread in different countries formed a sort of religious nationalism, especially during the thirteen century. (Schmemmann 1977: 276-278) Even during the Roman Empire’s existence, the Western Church had from the beginning a more juridical role and developed better and quicker relations with the state. A clear division between the two institutions, state and church was made in the fourth century with the foundation of the Byzantine Theocracy. The separation had unlike back stage division of power; the Western Church<sup>12</sup> was ruled more within a hierarchy based on “juridical” practical norms and the Eastern Church’s general worldview was “eschatological”. Its role was mainly to ensure psychical support and decent well-being for all citizens.

The third period is the “post-Christian era”, inaugurated by the Eastern World’s collapse into ideas as religious atheism, individual materialism and state utilitarianism. The limitation of Russian Orthodoxy by Bolsheviks marked the decline of Eastern Orthodoxy in the modern European culture. The idea of Christian State or society died together with the beginning of state’s secularization. (Shmemmann 1979: 27-58)

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<sup>12</sup> After the schism, the term catholic was merely used in defining the old West Church of the Roman Empire, which adopted it in a wrong way. The West Church, developed into a new denomination, Roman Catholic and the term Catholic Church refers to the part of Church, which is in full communion with the bishop of Rome.

# 4. Religious plurality and Ecumenical Movement

Thomas Hobbes' argument in 1651 of a "social contract" ruled by an absolute sovereign marked the first big alteration of Christianity's status in Europe. The acceptance of religious plurality and the veneration of more than one doctrine was the base for the later state's secularization. The leviathan theory sustains the formation of a strong central government, which will decide general norms to follow for all. He also mentions "...making of the Scripture law, belonged to the civil sovereign" in order to stress out that the religious power should be subordinated to the civil sovereign one. Putting limits on the Christian Church's power gave place to religious speculations and encouraged the appearance of new movements, which came up with new interpretations of the Holy Bible. In the name of improvement and of a deeper understanding of the Holy Scripture, different protestant sects detached and developed from the Roman Church. Often, their innovative biblical revelations, conducted to the establishment of new ways of considering the individual's personal power and deciding possibilities. The sub-religions resulted cannot be considered an improvement, but a clear degeneration from the original doctrine. As mentioned by different scholars Orthodoxy<sup>13</sup>, it is the only remained part of the Christian dogma that did not degenerated from the original tradition. In Europe, the Eastern Orthodox Church is the one that is still firm in promoting the true Christian manifestation. (Scrima 1969)

However, after the Great Schism and the impact of all changes, the original Church of Christ transformed into a new body formed of different sub-churches. It is a fact that the process of Christianity's transformation inaugurated "the separation of Christianity from the Church" and paved its transformation into an institution. (Troitsky: 7) In the old

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<sup>13</sup> that in translation from the Greek language means the "correctly believing" or "correctly glorifying God"

times, the genuine Church was the only and the one, which reunited believers with faith in one religion. The terminology of *church* nowadays, has a different connotation. It refers to an international institution, which is an amalgam of members predicating different new-sophisticated doctrines. How that could lead to unification in Christ under similar moral and doctrinal values? Isn't that a utopia?

In 1937, the autodidact protestant movements from England, Europe and America, united in the World Council of Churches, motioned by the Ecumenical Movement. The original idea of the movement was to create a new institution with the power of a global order, which could revive the dying tradition of Protestantism, after the World War I. The general believe was that the modern Christian Church was a strong motion to create a global order, which should protect in a more organized way the individual rights. In 1946, John Foster Dulles, the international affairs spokesperson of the Ecumenical Movement of the Protestant Churches declared the following:

*"the character of the United Nations organization [was] very largely determined by the organized Christian forces which worked at San Francisco to complete what had been achieved at Bretton Woods."*<sup>14</sup>

This was the first public declaration that marked the influence of the Movement into international political affairs.<sup>15</sup> At this point worth it to mention that, the Ecumenical Protestantism supported and facilitated America's hegemonic status in the bipolar world, on the track of the Bretton Woods system. (Thomas 2005: 159) Except the achievement of a global political power, the movement's targets were the completion of human rights,

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<sup>14</sup> Excerpted from the Record of International Affairs Conference, Cambridge, Sunday morning, 4 Aug. 1946, at 8, WCC Archives, Geneva, Box 428.3.25. The Bretton Woods agreements (1944) established the post-war International Monetary Fund and an International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. There was a strong commitment among liberal Protestants to basing the post-World War II peace on a new world economic system.

<sup>15</sup> Here I need to mention that the movement had from the beginning a western character, and that the East European Orthodox Church first went into movement, in 1961 at the Delhi Third Assembly.

an improvement of human living and promotion of a good inter-racial church cooperation of all believers in Christ all over the world. Nowadays it aims to be a bridge between Orthodoxy, Catholicism and the protestant denominations. It encourages the collaboration mainly on a federative basis under the rules of a “Union”, and does not have the Holy Communion as common feature. The Holy Communion is the Christian act that brings all believers in Christ to “the fullness of Trinitarian and personal communion”. (Yannaras 1984: 18)

Taken into consideration that some of the principal ideas of the movement are (i) all denominations’ unification, (ii) the idea that religions formulate more flexible doctrinal principles, (iii) to accept other religions as equal and (iv) to promote general common ideas, one can say that the movement’s targets sound pretty much as the “standardization” and “harmonization” EU principles. The procedure of unification is a problem of integration and is not anymore a matter of Christian moral values. The plan to bring all believers in Christ together has at the basis a religious standardization, which will destroy most of the original faiths in the name of eligibility for the same institution-union: a Universal Church. A united and standardized Europe must have an common and homogenized religious institution!

Except the point of Holy Communion, another concept differentiates the World Council of Churches functions from the Orthodox Church: the importance of the “miracle”. The attendance of the Holy Communion in the Orthodox Church implies that during the ceremony, all believers become part of the same miracle: their unification with God, the Son, the Holy Spirit and with one another. The Council on the other hand, does not support any idea of a common miracle, but the idea of cooperation. The bishop Nikolai Velimirovich’ speech, at the first Faith and order conference of the Ecumenical Movement (1972) underlined that “a faith without miracles is no more than a philosophical system; and a church without miracles is no more than a welfare organization like the Red Cross”.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> The citation is from the speech of Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich of Ochrid at the first Faith and Order Conference in Lausanne 1972

## 5. Is Christian religion important in Europe?

The expansion of Ecumenical Movement provoked the Church's alteration from a religious body into an institutional one, which transformed its basic doctrinal aim from *agape* into *caritas*.<sup>17</sup> The Ecumenical Movement used the Christian Church' concept of unity in order to develop an institution for cooperation that tends to lead into a standardization of religions. In 2001, Jonathan Fox has published an article about the role of religion in politics. He claims that religion is "an overlooked element in International Relations" mainly because was no point in studying religion as long as the secularization process was very strong. With the Enlightenment, the critique against religion and the secularization process transformed the traditional world from a "moral" into a "material" one. Another motivation that he brings up is the "liberal education" which condemned the criticism towards other religions, and supported the tolerance. The idea was that no one was supposed to offend other believers, or to make them feel uncomfortable. The third explanation he gives is that "religion is a variable hard to measure" and most of the scholars avoid using it as a variable in the process of proving any founding. (Fox 2001: 54-59)

The fact that Europe's culture has Christian roots has been explained in the above chapters. Nevertheless, the question is if in a reality of multicultural Europe, means Christianity, in moral orthodox theological terms, anything? In the era of globalization, when in the tendency of unification seems to imply firstly change and secondly tolerance, the future of the genuine Christian Doctrine in Europe is insecure. The actual situation of Christianity in Europe is a representative case of the Pettito and Hatsopoulos' theory. The Christianity's return from the exile implied changes, and the most important one was the schism of 1054. The religious division of Europe between Catholic Church and

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<sup>17</sup> Agape- love, caritas- charity (Greek language)



Eastern Orthodoxy underlined the first transformation of Christian Doctrine. The second transformation was appearance of new protestant currents, and by then Western Europe, religiously speaking, transformed and divided again. However, with the formation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951, its six members were by excellence either Protestants either Catholics.<sup>18</sup> The first Orthodox country to become part of the European Union was Greece, which accomplished the membership in 1981 with the first Mediterranean enlargement. The next one came in 2004 (Cyprus) and in 2007 Bulgaria and Romania enjoyed the Union. For the reason that only four of the 27 member are Orthodox countries, and having been said above that the EU “fathers” were Christian Democrats, it seems to me normal that European Union is more familiar with the Western Catholic Church norms, than with the classical Eastern Orthodox one.

Regarding the importance of Christian roots for the European Union, I want to mention an event that happened in March 2003. Two European churches (Catholic and Romanian Orthodox) met and cooperated for a common purpose: the addition of the clause “predominantly Christian” in the European Constitution part referring to the religious heritage of European civilization. (Romocea) (Appendix 1) In The EU Constitution (25 April 2005), pg 9 is written that:

*“Proposal to mention Christian heritage explicitly not included but reference to religious heritage included”.*<sup>19</sup>

I do not know if that is a sign of indifference, of equality or of denying the real roots of Europe. To show respect and tolerance to all Europe’s religious denominations is perfectly understandable, but to deliberately omit to mention the historical fact that it’s cultural roots are Christian, personally I do not understand it. How can one trust afterwards the EU Constitution objectiveness in giving the right to the member countries to preserve their traditional heritage, when the same body “omits” to mention its own roots?

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<sup>18</sup>The members were: Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany

<sup>19</sup> [http://en.euabc.com/upload/rfConstitution\\_en.pdf](http://en.euabc.com/upload/rfConstitution_en.pdf)

Brown mentions the “two tiered” model of religion system, which marked the Christian religion from the Roman Empire. The model, structured on two societal sectors has divides the society in two levels: the elite and the plebeians. Brown underlines that the major difference between the two is that the religion of the elites is stronger while the religion of the masses, the popular one lacks of dynamism. (Brown 1981: 18-19) Redfield improves Brown’s theory and makes the connection between great/ little tradition and the popular/ elite religious classification. He underlines that it was always a misapprehension that popular religion is the religion of the ones with plebeian and primitive origins (which are more focused on traditions than on modernity), and that the religion of the elite is the one of the intellectually developed and civilized citizens. (Christian 1981: 51) On the other hand, the Max Weber’s Theory on the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of capitalism shows clear traces of “elitism” in the divine love and God’s preference for the chosen one and to the one that meets His demands. Only those believers deserve His help! (Weber 2002: 211)

As resulting from the history, the Western part of Europe was always the modern part, the elite and the Southeastern part was considered as more traditional and fundamentalist. Hammond points out that the Balkan countries were just pawns for the Western Europe. One of the Cold War first agreements was the “exchange of territories” between Churchill and Stalin: Romania and Bulgaria to the Soviet Union and the West regained control over Greece. If until 1945 certain East European countries were considered almost “barbarian” for the Western people’s imagination, during the Cold War they were just “different”. (Hammond 2004) Regarding the church status in Western Europe, the Catholic Church was always more close to the western standards than the Eastern Orthodox one because of its structure as international institution, which followed from the beginning a clear legal structure and recognition of only one leader: the Pope. (Badone 1990)

Leaving apart the communist period, when religious’ practices were inexistent at the societal level, after that a strong revival of Orthodoxy is to mention in East European

society. I do not think correct to consider that the accentuated western religious pluralism as sign of “elitism” but I am afraid that Western Europe consider Orthodoxy a kind of “popular” religion. My arguments are few and I will enumerate them further on.

After this schism, the individual’s expectations from religion have changed. With the establishment of the new form of state that covers the basic needs of the population, the citizens’ welfare and support have been centralized in institutions. The modern individual’s religious requests are conducted more by the curiosity in understanding the mystical than the need to be part of the miracle. With the years, the humanity’s scale of values changed and top priority became the achievement of power, in terms of political or economical influence. That shaped a new form of state that implemented the practice of theological liberalism, within the original Christianity’s values became confused.  
(Florovsky1959)

Montesquieu inaugurated the eighteenth century view of state with the society’s governmental power division into sovereign and administrative ones. He used the term of “*trias politica*”, to underline the separation of the administrative powers in only three fields: executive, legislative and judiciary, totally excluding the importance of clergy within the state. He is one of the first modern philosophers that emphasize the tendency of the modern human nature towards a creative combination that links the “fate of knowledge to the authority of commerce and liberty.” (Manent 1998: 112) The human liberty is measured in the contemporary society by standards as for instance of being independent, mainly economically. The individual must detach of anything that can show the smallest sign of weakness that can tire or limit its actions in some way, even though that is family, sentimental security or relation with God. The free will concept and its increasing importance paved the road for the inauguration of the individualistic society, where each person worries only about his personal targets. The social customs that are guiding one’s actions today are transforming the individual’s values into a convenient way living that often appears with the delimitation or death of the ethical religious values.  
(Yannaras 1984: 265-270)

A common religion, that in the old times was often a demanded condition for a good collaboration between the tribes, kingdoms or empires, became during last centenaries, an unnecessary circumstance for a good development of the modern international relations. Economical objectives are considered nowadays the most sought better-offs as results of a good cooperation. The state of the market society and economical power focuses more on material advantages than on the human priorities. (Polany 1944) The modern state has a well-structured anthropocentric attitude in terms of covering one's practical basic needs, but does not offer him much assistance regarding the spiritual ones. By the pluralist religious choice that gives to the individuals the opportunity to decide themselves which doctrine suits them better, the modern European society supports the idea of one's independency. (Appendix 2) One's general interests and need to be part and to understand something different, spiritual, and mystic conduct the new wave of religiosity. These new individual's concerns seem to eclipse the norm of secular Christianity and to conduct an innovative revival of religions in society. (Schmemmann 1979: 19)

In my opinion, Charles Taylor's term, "exclusive humanism" aims to be the explanation for the modern Europe society's shape. He considers that even though the new type of humanism has his roots in the "Christian Agape"<sup>20</sup> it is defined by a set of general norms regarding common goods and equalitarian rights, which are applied within a super-community. The "secularization of the public space" and the "disengaged, disciplined agent" are two central pillars of the modern civil society and modern exclusive humanism. In the name of developed democracy, respected human rights, right to tolerance, the transcendent religious or spiritual ideas must be kept out of the European Union public sphere. (Taylor 2007: 242-257) He claims that in the contemporaneous society "the blindness is typical of modern exclusive secular humanism" and encourages

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<sup>20</sup> Christ predicated was "to love one another" regarding the relations between human being. The central concept of the Christian dogma is "agape" (from the Greek «αγαπη»=love), considered as a necessity to be fulfilled in order to lead to the correct construction and development of any community.

the individual to have high targets more conducted by the self than the classical Christian moral norms. (Taylor 1999: 34) In short, what he points out is mainly that is much easier for a regional body as for instance the European Union, to handle obedient disciplined individualistic societies than ones conducted by fundamentalist values are.

## 6. Conclusions

As stand in the beginning of the paper, I believe that one can mark an obvious clash of norms between East European Orthodoxy and EU. The EU integration supposes a general standardization and unification process. The Ecumenical Movement is the organization that sustains the EU standardization objective in the field of religions. As far as the Ecumenical Movement is motioned by the Protestant Churches, it is obvious that its proposal have a westernized character, fact that is not accepted by the Eastern Orthodox Church. The Petito and Hatzopoulos' theory underlines that in fact, Christianity have changed in order to become eligible for the new Europe, from genuine Christian divided with the schism of 1054 into Catholic and Orthodox, after the Western part divided again in Catholic and Protestant, and finally the final form, Protestantism is the one that fits better the EU demands.

The most important difference between the EU and Eastern Orthodoxy is on my opinion a question of accessibility. The access to the EU it is judged by a central body/institution and judged in conformity to certain norms. The countries that want join the EU must fulfill the Copenhagen's Criteria in order to become part of it, and for many of them the access is still restricted. In orthodoxy in stead, the access is free for everyone, sinner or not, does not exist any rule which points out any reason that someone could not be

eligible to become Orthodox. The fact that the first EU members were either Catholic or Protestant, shaped a union motioned and aware mostly about western religious denominations. I believe that after the end of the Cold War, when EU opened its gates for the communist countries, the Catholic and Protestant states had quicker access to the Union. In these cases, one cannot negate that the historical and geographical coordinates played their positive role, but I think that the fact that their religion was more suitable for Europe, was as well an advantage.

Another aspect that I would like to underline is that within the EU the members obey to certain rules and sovereign because they are asked to, in order to achieve economical and political advantages. In contrary, in Orthodoxy the individual obey because has decided alone to do so. EU promotes freedom, but it is one with limits, while Orthodoxy offers a total one because compulsoriness in terms of “must to do” does not exist in Orthodoxy. While Orthodoxy deals with the infinite, and all individuals are welcomed to join, European Union is just a limited space, which can extend to a certain level.

I suppose that a secularized and disciplined Europe will be easier to handle by the EU. By minimizing any fundamentalist ideas that could support and trust more a transcendent power than global-regional hegemony, the EU targets will be easier fulfilled. Nevertheless, I must mention here that the East European Orthodox Church militates for a united Europe, founded on reciprocal understanding, fraternized nations and common consciences’ convergence. The Church underlines that the exclusive economical junction is not a sufficient base for a moral Europe’s development. The fact that EU promotes and demands a standardization of the member nations, involves two risks: (i) a possible disappearance of the original European civilizations and (ii) diminution and limitation of the citizens’ personal freedom.

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# Appendixes

## Appendix 1

Excerpted from Romocea, Cristian: The Future of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the European Union (<http://www.faithineurope.org.uk/roceu.pdf>)

“The Church used the following arguments in support of this plea:

1. The majority of the European population is Orthodox/Catholic/Protestant Christian.
2. The idea of a united Europe, which was first uttered by Christian-Democrats like Adenauer, Monet and De Gasperi, was aimed at an economic community, which would form a cultural and political community founded primarily on Christianity and only secondarily on the Greco-Latin heritage.
3. Christian morality and the social work of the Church have inspired a respect for human dignity and have influenced civil society with ideals of liberty, equality, and concern for the marginalized. Though secularized by the Enlightenment, these values, which shape today’s humanist idealism, have their roots in the Judeo-Christian tradition.
4. European culture, art, music and literature have been inspired for centuries by the Bible and by Christian spirituality, both in Catholic and Protestant Western Europe and in Orthodox Eastern Europe.
5. Lastly, Romanian culture is thoroughly indebted to Christianity. Romania as the only Latin Orthodox country can be a model for Europe. Eastern Orthodox in faith, Latin in language and consisting of a variety of denominations representative of Europe, which have coexisted despite religious and cultural differences and which have enriched the national spiritual thesaurus, Romania is a miniature of Europe where various Christian Churches must be allowed to preserve their distinctive spiritual identity.”

## Appendix 2

Excerpted from EU Constitution 25/04/2005

Article II- 70: Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion

“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes freedom to change religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or in private, to manifest religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.”