

BOOK REVIEW

Elena Cristina Vohn*

Dan Dungaciu, Ruxandra Iordache (editors), *The Perfect Storm of the European Crisis*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017, 364 pp.

European Union is in a continuous crisis for a decade. The global economic crisis triggered in 2007 has hit the European Union in the highest degree, through the banking system crisis and the sovereign debt crisis. Since then, there have been overlapping successive waves of crisis, emerging at various level the European construction, from deepening the economic crisis with all its effects, the Grexit that has turned into Brexit to migration and terrorism. All these phenomena that the EU is facing today are found in the core of the debates taking place in the European public space.

An important contribution to a better understanding of these phenomenon and for identifying solutions for the future of Europe is the book *The Perfect Storm of the European Crisis*, recently published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing and edited by Dan Dungaciu and Ruxandra Iordache. The volume that reunites the contributions of the scientists from the „Ion I. C. Brătianu“ Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations of the Romanian Academy „decrypts the status of today’s Europe, hit from all directions, and — all the more unbearable — concomitantly“ (p. VII). This phenomenon that „affects all the level of our lives — be they political, economic, cultural or social“ has been called „the perfect storm“ — the title of the volume.

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The book has 4 parts and reunites 18 studies on the most challenging issues facing the EU today. The part one, *The European Crisis: Dilemmas, Texts and Pretexts* is opened by the Dan Dungaciu's study „*The Perfect Storm*” in Europe: *Towards a New Way of Understanding the European Crisis and its Consequences*. The study proposes a new model for understanding the European crisis that is „of a different nature and acknowledges essentially three levels.” The first level is the Paretian model of „mutual dependencies”, the second level is a fundamental problem, that is absent in the actual debates, the identitary question (the author making a pertinent analyze on the identitary European crisis which he consider to be „the nodal axis of the crisis”) and the third level aims to make a clear distinction between cause and effect, independent variable and dependent variable (p. 6). The whole analysis is aimed to identify the ways towards a new European normality.

The following studies approach different theoretical aspects of the European crisis. Lucian-Ștefan Dumitrescu analyses the European Union exceptionalism in *The Strategic Culture of the European Union: Security Dilemmas of an Anti-Geopolitical Project*, based on the main idea that „through exploring the strategic culture broached by Brussels, the distant sources of some of the major security issues facing today's European Union can be unravelled.” (p. 25) In the study „*The Perfect Storm*” and the *Transformations of the European Strategic Culture: Several Considerations*, Gabriela Tănăsescu believes that the actual context „dominated by the unilateral American leadership and a non-integrated European strategic culture, could constitute the EU's chance to return to a strategic vision defined by the coordinates of a defensive, humanitarian and irenic strategic paradigm.” (p. 49). The next study sign by Darie Cristea and Diana Didă, *Crisis of Confidence or Institutional Crisis? Declining Confidence in Institutions as a Symptom of Institutional Crisis in the EU Space*, approaches one of the most important issue of the European democracy, the low trust in the European institution or the democratic deficit. Lorena-Valeria Stuparu is the author of the study *Globalisation and the Significance of Populism in Europe*, that offers a comparative conceptual analysis of populism. Cristina Vohn analyzes the various scenarios of the future of the EU that appears in the European public space in *Perspectives on the Future of Europe*.

The second part of the book *Multiple Challenges: Facets of the European Crisis* contains 5 studies on the specific aspects of the European crisis: Cristian-Ion Popa, *Ordnungspolitik: the German Solution*, Viorella Manolache, *“Europastorm”: Brexit – the Crisis of a Europe in Crisis*, Bogdan M. Popescu, *Europe: Between the Crisis of Legitimacy and Brexit*, Cristi Pantelimon, *TTIP: A Controversial Treaty*, Răzvan Munteanu, Nicolae Țîbrigan, *Europe under the Pressure of Hybrid Threats*.

Four studies are reunites in the Three Part of the volume *The Apex of the Storm: Migration and Terrorism*. Ruxandra Iordache (*The EU and the Turkish Candidacy: The Chronicle of a Perpetual Crisis*) and Lucian Jora (*Functionality Aspects of the EU – Turkey Agreement Relating to the Management of Migration*) analyses the controversial problem of the integration of Turkey in the EU; Oana Simion focus on *The Migration Route in the Western Balkans and the Challenges to the European Union* and Sanda Cincă approaches the terrorist phenomenon in *Current Trends of the Terrorist Phenomenon in the European Union*.

The last part of the volume *Perceptions and Assesment in the European Press* contains another 3 studies on the different aspect of the European crisis reflected in the European press: Henrieta Anișoara Șerban, *“Europe-Titanic”: The European Union Among Distress Signals*; Carmen Burcea, *The Perfect Storm: Waves of Migrants in the Mediterranean or the Sinking of the EU – Perceptions in the Media*; Cristina-Georgiana Ivan, *The Refugee Crisis: The “Dreyfus Affair” of the Extreme Right in Contemporary France?*

The present volume, through the themes approached, —some of them absent from the European public agenda — represents an important contribution to the public debate on the European crisis. The 18 studies formulate questions and offer pertinent answers to the actual profound European crisis. Yet, as Dan Dungaciu asserts in the *Introductory Note* „the book does not claim to offer definitive answers to what is happening to all of us. Far from that. However, it attempts to outline the context in which these answers can be found and, moreover, to point out the places where one should search for them.“ (p. VIII)