

INTERVIEW WITH DOC. DR. SC. IVICA MIŠKULIN

Interviewed by: Damir Kopljar¹

Ivica Miškulin was born in Slavonski Brod on August 13, 1979. After graduating from high school (“Matija Mesić” in Slavonski Brod, language department) in 1997, he enrolled in the study of history and sociology at the Croatian Studies at the University of Zagreb, where he graduated in 2002 and thus achieved the degree of professor of history/sociology. In 2005 he obtained a master’s degree (humanities, history) at the Faculty of Philosophy, the University of Zagreb (title of master’s thesis: “Democratic Party in Slavonia and Western Srijem 1919-1924”). In 2009 he achieved the degree of Doctor of Humanities (in the field of history) at the Croatian Studies at the University of Zagreb (doctoral dissertation topic: “International Community and Western Slavonia 1991-1995”). In 2002 he was employed as an assistant at the Croatian Institute of History, in the Branch for the History of Slavonia, Srijem and Baranja (within the scientific research project “Democratic Movement, Greater Serbia Aggression and the Homeland War in Eastern Croatia”). In 2011 he was employed as an assistant professor at the Croatian Catholic University. In October 2009, he was elected a research associate, and in September 2013, a senior research associate. In November 2011, he was elected to the scientific-teaching title of assistant professor and the position of assistant professor. In February 2017, he



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was elected to the scientific-teaching title of associate professor and to the position of associate professor. In February 2018, he was elected a scientific advisor. The central topic of his scientific work is the contemporary political history of Croatia, with particular emphasis on the period of the creation of the Republic of Croatia and the period between the two world wars. Also, since 2006, he was first within the study program of history and croatology at Croatian studies of the University of Zagreb, and since 2010 within the study program of the history of the Croatian Catholic University in Zagreb, he has taught numerous courses. He actively speaks English and German.

The idea of European integration arose strongly after the Second World War. Can you describe to us what the political and economic situation was like in post-war Europe and how it impacted the process of European integration?

The integration we call the European Union today has its beginnings in a phenomenon that we should define by practical necessity. In the atmosphere of the Cold War, Soviet threats, and the negligible popularity of communism, the imperative of rebuilding Western Europe was not conceivable without the return of Germany. Belgium, the Netherlands, and France needed economically strong but militarily weak Germans. After the Prague coup and the blockade of Berlin (1948-1949), the French (Monnet) made the first move that should rightly be called one of the most significant diplomatic revolutions of the twentieth century in Europe: they proposed putting all French and German steel production under joint control and administration, within a structure (or organization) that will be open to other European countries. It was an attractive and practical solution to French and German problems: Paris would have control over the vital resources of a giant neighbor (Ruhr et al.), And therefore a weakened potential adversary on

the east side of the Rhine, and the Germans (although only West Germany) an opened door for a return into the society of the accepted states and peoples of Europe. The classic pragmatics we know today as the Schuman Plan (or Declaration) was presented to the public and Americans on May 9, 1950, and from which the Treaty of Paris was signed in April of the following year, the European Coal and Steel Community. At this moment, it is essential to point out also the still unstructured draft of the future common European space.

At the end of the First World War, a policy was established with the aim of preventing Germany from rising to the status of great power in any foreseeable future. Such a policy proved wrong and was conducive to the rise of Nazism. After the Second World War, a different principle emerged, best reflected in Schuman's declaration. Can you explain why it is important and considered a fundamental document that will start European integration?

All of the above is difficult to understand today if we do not know to what extent the Germans of that time were considered European outcasts. Here's one example: in the early post-war years, almost no one wanted to play a football game with the West Germans! Thus, when Schuman presented the Declaration on May 9, 1950, he embarked on the unknown in two ways: on the one hand, he abandoned the former direction of French foreign policy (alliances aimed at controlling Germany and sometimes occupying parts of German territory). on the other hand, he offered the former aggressor an opportunity for a legitimate return to the European scene. The French move is one of the turning points in modern history. Of course, Schuman's plan did not foresee the future structure of the common European space, especially its current form. Nevertheless, the European Coal and Steel Community

consisted of six Western European countries that showed a willingness to pursue their interests in an atmosphere of cooperation rather than wars.

When we talk about the beginnings of European integration, we cannot ignore Konrad Adenauer. As the first post-war chancellor in Germany, he achieved a historic reconciliation with France and definitely steered Germany towards democracy and peace. How vital is Adenauer's role in the beginnings of European integration?

“Das ist unser Durchbruch!” Or “This is our opportunity / our breakthrough!” was the first reaction of the great Adenauer to Schuman's plan. I think that the reaction had been spot on, that is, it shows the essence of West German calculations with the European Coal and Steel Community. Thus, for the first time since World War II, the Germans became members of an international organization on an equal footing (i.e., not defeated) and further reaffirmed their commitment to the Western alliance, just as Adenauer had always wanted. Therefore, it is not surprising that West Germany was the first to ratify Schuman's plan. Adenauer and other Christian Democrats behind this first joint European space project previously watched the disintegration of their world, occupation, and civil war in some places, so understandably, in economic and cultural cooperation and unification of the sovereignty of France, Belgium, the Netherlands, West Germany, Luxembourg, and Italy saw a way out of nothingness.

European integration has taken place gradually and through a number of documents. Can you list the most critical documents from the early phase of European integration and explain to us what their importance is?

Don't begrudge me, but the answer to this question would require more substance. I will therefore mention two that I consider particularly important. The first Treaty of Rome was signed on March 25 1957 (entered into force in early 1958), establishing the European Economic Community. It should rightly be considered a new response to adversity or another practical necessity. Due to decolonization problems hitting a number of Western European countries and economic growth imperatives, six member states have decided to remove much of the barrier to interstate economic cooperation. Hence the agreement brings export promotion, shifting resources from old to new industries, and incentives to favored sectors such as agriculture. In economic terms, the experiment was a great success, while the assessment of political development is, as expected, ambivalent. There is no doubt that by the early 1970s, the European Economic Community had become a Franco-German condominium, to which the French set the political direction and the Germans provided the economic basis. It is also clear how the Common European Space project has somehow managed to survive, how it has progressed economically, and how other European countries have begun to show a growing interest in joining it. In more or less the same form, but with an expanded composition, the project lasted until the end of the Cold War, when a new institutional and financial revolution took place. I am talking about the 1992 Maastricht Treaty or the Treaty on European Union. As is well known, a common European currency (the euro) was then established, and again behind all this is Germany's (now united) new integration into Western integration: in short, Paris persuaded Bonn to abandon the German mark and introduce an enlarged German state into the network of common European laws, rules, and agreements. On the other hand, the Germans imposed almost draconian conditions on the

new integration, primarily the dependence of the new currency on the financial principles of the German central bank, which are low inflation and minimal deficits. I believe you recognize some of the European Union's problems that existed until now and the existing ones in the devastating lack of flexibility to adapt these rules. However, the Maastricht Treaty is important for three other reasons: it has given new impetus to NATO (as the French were not thrilled with the rapid accession of the states of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, their membership in the Western Military Alliance would be a kind of lobby of the common European space), the resurgence of the public interest in the European Union (until the end of the Cold War, European issues were exclusive to anonymous Brussels officials and then became a matter of public debate) and opening up space for the integration of almost all of Western Europe (Eastern and South-Eastern still had to wait).

What was the attitude of the superpowers, the USA and the USSR, towards the creation of a single European community?

There is no doubt that without the United States, there would be no European Coal and Steel Community, and later neither the European Economic Community nor the European Community. The American security umbrella protected Western Europe, thus allowing it autonomous development. Later stories about how, for example, the Treaty of Rome was a response to American supremacy are mere fairy tales and dreams of European propagandists. As expected, the European Union slipped under the American umbrella only after the end of the Cold War, and the first step into the field of international politics ended in defeat (the wars in the former Yugoslavia). For Moscow, the common European space (under any name) during the Cold War is nothing more than a passing embarrassment and a place where attempts are being made to bring discord within the Western alliance.

Have European integrations resulted in success, and if so, which individual successes would you single out?

One British historian rightly concluded that when you take everything into account, i.e., add up the positive phenomena and then subtract the negative ones, the European Union is a decent entity. I completely agree with that view. The economic benefits of membership in the European Union are quite tangible, and even the most vocal euro-skeptics must acknowledge this. Furthermore, today's interests of the European Union's member states are so mutually integrated and intertwined that the idea of war between them is in the full sense of the word absurd. It is interesting to note that the European Union does not have mechanisms to prevent war, and it (fortunately, of course) does not happen. Freedom of travel, work, and study has not been recorded in European history, and this is also undoubted merit of the European Union. I emphasize that the European Union (although still slower than, say, the United States) is showing more and more clearly how it can make a positive learning curve, i.e., learn valuable lessons and apply them in a crisis situation. But let's not overpraise here: the failures of the European Union can surprise us even today.

Did European integration have an impact on the democratization process that took place in the 1970s in countries such as Portugal, Spain, and Greece? If so, what is so appealing about the idea of a united Europe that former dictatorial governments are renouncing their dictatorships and embarking on a path of European integration?

Undoubtedly. Namely, both in the seventies of the last century and today, it is impossible to become a member of the European Community or the European Union if the state is not founded on democratic foundations. Although with some difficulties, I think it is

unnecessary to prove that Greece, Portugal, and Spain are more accessible and richer countries today than they were before joining the European Union. In the last forty years, there have been no military coups, violent coups, armed conflicts, or, let's not forget, bankruptcies in those countries. It is helpful to remind your readers that joining the European Union is entirely voluntary, and if a regime does not want liberalization (or a precondition for membership), it should be concluded that it is a hardcore dictatorship that does not want to give its citizens the right to freedom of choice. Such was the case in communist Yugoslavia in the 1980s.

What future do you envisage for Europe? Will the process of political unification and the creation of the “United European States” intensify, or will the idea that advocates economic unification and the survival of strong and sovereign nation-states win?

I believe that the final victory in the short term will not be taken away by any of the currents you cite. This then means the continuation of the existing non-profiling of the European Union, with all the problems that are not difficult to imagine. If you ask me in terms of the thankless task of educated guessing, I assume that the common European space will be built in two (only at first glance) opposing directions, namely subsidiarity and centralization. For example, I think it is quite clear that the European Union needs a common armed force, and I could bet it will consist of national components. Again, a number of new joint institutions and organizations will be established, such as the police, research projects, and the like. The survival instinct will orient the European Union to meet the needs of nation-states so that their disappearance should not be feared. It is essential to keep in mind that the common European space has been eluding any form of comparison for seventy years (perhaps the closest, though not nearly identical,

examples are the Prussian Customs Union and the Swiss Confederation), so we may be witnessing a whole new form of a supranational organization.

What is the reason for the UK's exit from the European Union?

When I try to explain to students that the role of emotions in political life is still far from being inconsequential, I take the example of Great Britain. I would like to remind you that this country has long and persistently rejected calls to join the European Coal and Steel Community and the European Economic Community, facilitated by the elites' inability to assume Britain's post-war prospects rationally. If not by 1950, then by 1957, it should have been completely clear to London that the wealth of empires was only a matter of glorious past, and special relations with the Americans only a convenient propaganda motive. Nevertheless, the irrational attitude that one does not want to have too much sway in continental affairs prevailed for a long time. Recently, the sad episode we know as Brexit was caused by the failed political calculation of then-Prime Minister David Cameron, which (following the law of unpredictable consequences) resulted in a nationalist-sovereignist mess, i.e., judging by emotion rather than cold reason. Even today, I do not see what economic benefits London gained from leaving the Union, and it is pretty clear what economic benefits it has lost. (I suggest you take a look at how they feel in the City!) I recall, the UK enjoyed privileged status in the European Union. The whole episode shows us that the European Union must not be taken for granted, especially only as an ATM.

For the last question, we will go back to the beginning and quote one part of the Schuman Declaration, which says: "Europe will not be created at once or according to a single plan. It will be

built through concrete achievements that will first create true solidarity. “From this sentence, we see that solidarity is a fundamental value of Europe. Do you think that the idea of solidarity was betrayed during the great financial crisis in 2008 when Greece begged for help, cheap loans, and debt relief? Also, was solidarity called into question at the beginning of the corona crisis when Italy lacked medicines and medical staff, and instead of the European Union, which initially did not help, military medical teams from Russia and China were triumphantly deployed in Italy?”

The best that can be said about the action of the European Union concerning the crisis situations you mentioned in the question is: let such a long and painful arrival to solve the problem never happen again! As far as I know, many decision-makers were well aware that only common European bonds (Eurobonds) could pull Greece out, which must be backed by a different role for the European Central Bank and, of course, Germany. Nevertheless, the torturing of Greece took an awkwardly long time, and in the end, we implemented the solutions you mentioned yourself. The same goes for the experience of the crown of the crisis: in the beginning, incompetence and compromise, and now the European Recovery Plan and vaccines in as much quantity as you want! I do not doubt that the European Union will successfully resolve the next crisis as well, but I am not convinced that we will not have to wait long for that again.

Bonus questions

Konrad Adenauer stated in 1951: “The process of integration and the creation of larger communities of peoples serves to uphold Western Christian values that give meaning to our lives. Furthermore, it serves social progress and material well-being, which in a democratic world can be achieved not in opposition but in accordance with the freedom of the individual and the people. “Can it be said that the European Union, or the integrations that preceded that name, is based on Christian values? How is it today in that matter?”

I think they are more than they are not. I know that this answer will not satisfy you, but that is precisely how I see the situation. So let's look at the facts. Today, the European Union is the only peaceful empire of global reach, the largest provider of humanitarian aid globally, and an area of the highest degree of respect for human and religious rights and tolerance of dissent. All of the above, in my opinion, is the embodiment of a practical Christian view of the world (at least as I see it). It should be clear that the European Union is a shared space inhabited by people of different national, religious, and other faiths and that it must therefore maintain these differences and mutual tolerance.

Was the idea of founding the European Union based on Christian values finally defeated during the debate on the never-before-adopted European Constitution (later replaced by the Treaty of Lisbon), in which all mention of Europe's Christian roots was ultimately removed?

I consider this omission to be a mistake that should not have happened. Of course, bearing in mind the richness of today's European roots, it was necessary to look more extensively at today's common European space's political, cultural, and ideological

foundations. Christianity had to be given an extremely important place here.

Many leaders in the European Union are proud of its role in promoting peace, democracy, and human rights, which was crowned with the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the European Union in 2012. However, when we look at severe conflicts in the world, such as the war in Syria, the situation in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and elsewhere, no one expects the European Union to bring peace with its intervention, while many expect it from America, Russia or China. How do you assess the European Union's real contribution to world peace or a new wave of democratization?

The European Union does not have a joint military force, so how do you expect its interventions to bring real peace somewhere in the world? Of course, no one is too afraid of you when you don't have a military force. You pointed out well: no one expects... However, a small addition: everyone expects humanitarian and financial aid from the European Union. Such a form of influence or "soft power" (i.e., action based on cooperation, not coercion) is not unknown and has sometimes been successful in resolving the crisis. The problem with this approach is twofold: on the one hand, what if you can't force the aggressor to withdraw with appeals and sanctions, and on the other, what if an organization becomes too dependent or accustomed to the concept of "soft power"? You know, the European Union has always reminded me of a strong man who is mostly the dearest in the neighborhood or village, but he doesn't want to offend anyone too much! This is really a pity because I believe that the European Union could contribute to world peace and democracy far more effectively, for example, by setting up a joint peacekeeping force.

The entire European continent has been divided on the issue of migrants since the great wave of 2015 until today. Although many illusions (“Wir schaffen das!”, We Can Do It !, uttered by Chancellor Merkel in 2015) seem to have shattered since then, these border countries, in particular, are increasingly protecting their external borders from uncontrolled waves of migrants. However, it is still a fact today that Belarus or Turkey are constantly blackmailing the European Union with migrants. How do you see it? What is needed to resolve this issue in the long run?

I cannot entirely agree with some of the statements in your question. As far as I follow the situation, the issue of migrants in Germany is not too big a problem, and I know of thousands of examples in which immigrants fit perfectly into German society. Socialization indeed takes a very long time, but it is equally valid that the European Union has no future without an intelligent immigration policy. I believe that the European Union has become too intimidated by anti-immigrant and other radical right-wing political parties and movements and has significantly tightened its policy at the external borders. Here you can see how much of a problem it is when others see you almost only as a safe house: everyone wants to come to you, which causes unwanted domestic reactions. It would be far wiser to intervene strongly in Iraq, Afghanistan, or Syria and establish a modern democratic and stable society there (it is now apparent in a completely different way from the current one). Together with the USA, the European Union often forgets that it is not enough to be the best (richest, most modern, etc.), but also to behave that way.

RAZGOVOR: FRANCESCO GIUBILEI

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Francesco Giubilei autor je i izdavač s prebivalištem u Italiji. Predsjednik je talijanske konzervativne zaklade Fondazione Tatarella i osnivač *think tanka* Nazione Futura. Također predaje na Sveučilištu G. Fortunato u Beneventu. G. Giubilei je nedavno uvršten na Forbesovu listu 100 najutjecajnijih mladih u Italiji ispod 30 godina. Autor je devet knjiga uključujući *Povijest europske konzervativne misli* (njegovo prvo djelo objavljeno na engleskom). Spisi mu se često pojavljuju u talijanskim časopisima *Il Giornale*, *The American Conservative* i *The European Conservative*. Član je Znanstvenoga odbora za budućnost Europe talijanske Vlade.



Je li ulazak Italije ili bilo koje druge zemlje u Europsku uniju doveo u pitanje pojam “suvereniteta naroda”?

Koncept narodnoga suvereniteta temelj je talijanskoga ustava i svake demokracije, posljednjih desetljeća dogodio se proces koji je naveo nacije na predaju dijela svoga suvereniteta nadnacionalnim entitetima kao što je Europska unija, što je značilo gubitak dijela narodnoga suvereniteta. To je proces koji se također odvijao s pandemijom i s trijumfom tehnokracije koja je umanjila ulogu nacionalnih parlamenata u korist tehničko-znanstvenih odbora.

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Kako je i u kojoj mjeri identitet europskih građana ugrožen čestim migrantskim valovima i upadima preko utvrđenih granica?

Postoji važna razlika između neregularne i regularne imigracije. Ulaziti regularno u Europu, pronaći posao, plaćati poreze, poštovati zakone i našu povijest je jedno, skroz drugo je ulaziti nezakonito. Potrebno je kontrolirati nacionalne granice (a samim tim i europske) iz dva razloga: kako za nas europske građane, tako i za one koji su se preselili u Europu legalno se žrtvujući i koji zato ne mogu shvatiti kako je moguće da stotine tisuća ljudi ulaze u Europu bez poštovanja zakona.

Koliko držite bitnim načelo supsidijarnosti u vidu ostavljanja autonomije nadležnosti rješavanja unutarnjih pitanja država članica (primjerice obrazovanje, kultura, sloboda medija i slično) za budućnost Europske unije?

Supsidijarnost je temeljni aspekt, blizina centara moći životima građana pomaže u postizanju veće učinkovitosti i poštovanja želja ljudi. Nažalost, vrlo je često stanje suprotno od onoga kako se događa u EU, gdje imamo nadnacionalnu strukturu koja se miješa u svako područje života građana ne poštujući lokalne zajednice.

Jeste li osobno više za Europsku uniju kao federativnu državu ili kao konfederaciju suverenih nacionalnih država, i zašto?

Zalažem se za konfederalnu Europu, Europu nacija koja uzima u obzir identitete i razlike različitih nacija, ali i zajedničke točke koje pridonose oblikovanju Europe. Naprotiv, ideja Sjedinjenih Europskih Država sa snažnom birokratskom centralizacijom nije smjer koji moramo slijediti za našu budućnost.

Može li Europska unija u budućnosti biti sila ravnopravna Rusiji, Kini i SAD-u?

Kada bi Europska unija imala sposobnost baviti se nizom pitanja na jednoznačan način i imati jasnu viziju u vanjskoj politici, na temu energije, u obranu svoga kršćanskoga identiteta, a time i kršćana progonjenih u svijetu, mogla bi natjecati se sa SAD-om, Kinom, Rusijom. Danas to nije slučaj i EU nije prepoznata kao utjecajan sugovornik, kao druge velike nacije.

Koliko Europska unija danas dobro uspostavlja zajedničku vanjsku politiku? Jeste li za jačanje vojske Europske unije?

Prije nego li razmišljamo o zajedničkoj europskoj vojsci, trebali bismo razmisliti o zajedničkoj vanjskoj politici, koja danas nedostaje. Postoje njemačka, francuska, talijanska vanjska politika i postepeno i ostalih država članica, ali gotovo uvijek nedostaje snage govoriti o nekim zajedničkim pitanjima jednim glasom. Ako se ovaj korak ne učini prvi, pričati o zajedničkoj europskoj vojsci je utopija.

Kako se u vašoj zemlji gledalo na migrantsku krizu i držite li da je EU imala dobar politički i pravni odgovor na nju?

Italija je jedna od europskih nacija s najvećim problemima vezanima za useljavanje - budući da je poluotok, Italija je s tri strane okružena morem i u južnoj Italiji, posebice na Lampeduzi i Siciliji, stotine migranata svakodnevno stižu morem, pokušavajući nezakonito ući u državu. Situacija za našu zemlju je teška jer se osjećamo ostavljenima sami se suočiti s izvanrednom situacijom koja se ne odnosi samo na Italiju nego i cijelu Europu.

Christopher Dawson u knjizi Razumijevanje Europe iznio je tvrdnju da, kako je Europa bivala manje kršćanskom, tako je opadao njezin utjecaj u međunarodnim odnosima. Je li po Vama kršćanski identitet Europe bitan za njezinu političku buduć-

nost i treba li se njegovo mjesto regulirati na razini Europe, kao što je recimo u ustavu Mađarske?

Zaboravljanje kršćanskih korijena znači negiranje našega europskoga identiteta, Europa je utemeljena na kršćanskim korijenima. Ono što se događa nije samo neuspjeh u sjećanju na kršćansko naslijeđe Europe, nego i pokušaj njegova poništenja kroz načelo “cancel culture”, koje se ne odnosi samo na spomenike već i na našu povijest i identitet.

Što za Vas znači Europa u najširem kontekstu toga pojma?

Europa je civilizacija ujedinjena zajedničkim klasičnim i kršćanskim korijenima, to je više jedna ideja, nego zemljopisni izraz, to je skup identiteta koji ujedinjeni zajedno čine zajedničku povijesnu i kulturnu viziju.