

INTRODUCTION

VALENTINA PRICOPIE *

The current issue of the *Romanian Journal of Sociological Studies* brings together several presentations given in English on the occasion of the International Conference “From West to East: Metamorphoses of Discourses in Europe”/« De l’Ouest à l’Est: Métamorphoses des Discours en Europe », held in Bucharest on 24–25 October 2019. This event was the fourth international conference organized by the francophone research group “Discours d’Europe”, after its meetings in Besançon (2013), Brussels (2015) and Turin (2017). In Romania, the conference was organized by the Institute of Sociology and the University of Bucharest, under the aegis of the Observatory of Discourses and Counter-Discourses Related to the European Construction (France), and benefited from the support of CEREFREA Vila Noël and Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie – Bureau Europe Centrale et Orientale (AUF-BECO).

The scientific objective of the symposium was to question the current meanings of discourses on the West-East relationship in the European Union, as well as their emerging transformations, the scientific examination of which still remains difficult to identify. That is why the interdisciplinary openness in the humanities and social sciences was the scientific bet of our meeting in Bucharest, and crucial for this special issue.

The opening plenary session brought together the communications of the invited speakers: Prof. Diana Mishkova (Center for Advanced Studies of Sofia, Bulgaria), Prof. Eméritus Jean-François Tétu (Institute of Political Studies of Lyon, France) and Prof. Emeritus Ioan Pânzaru (University of Bucharest, Director of CEREFREA). Another 27 papers, selected following the double-blind evaluation process provided by the members of the Scientific Committee, were presented and debated in the various thematic panels of the symposium. Participants from nine countries (Austria, Bulgaria, USA, France, Kosovo, Morocco, Poland, Romania, Tunisia, and Turkey) exchanged ideas about the different discourses in Europe in

* Senior researcher 1st degree, Social Europe Research Laboratory, Institute of Sociology, Romania. E-mail: valpricopie@gmail.com



order to find traces of the “European discourses” to the East. Eight of them are present within the current issue of our journal with six papers dealing with the complexity and thematic variety of the “European discourses”, as well as the necessity to take the path of interdisciplinarity. Therefore, media and communication studies (see Tétu and Aubussier, Bourmeche, Mureșanu Tăut, Apostol) remain central to the general approach of the issue, while sociology and European studies on the one hand (see Pricopie and Dâmboeanu) and international relations on the other hand (see Ciapin) complete this eclectic picture. The result is an issue covering: (1) a deep reflection on the rise of national-populism in Europe (Tétu and Aubussier), (2) two empirical insights from Eastern countries: on the symbolic and social boundaries of Europe as seen from Bulgaria (see Ciapin), and respectively, on the representations of the European project and the European discourse about peace in the Romanian media during the difficult years of the Second World War (see Pricopie and Dâmboeanu); (3) one empirical study on the representation of A10 migrants in the British newspapers (see Bourmeche); (4) an empirical comparative study focusing on the similarities and disparities of the media discourse on MMR vaccination across Europe (see Mureșanu Tăut), and (5) a theoretical approach on how the European Union deals with the problematic relationship between journalism and fake news (see Apostol).

This special issue symbolically called *Dividing Discourses across Europe* is the first of a series dedicated to the event held in Bucharest last October; it will be followed this year by an edited volume which will bring together the papers presented at the conference, translated into French and prepared at the University of Bucharest, and next year, by a second special issue of the *Romanian Journal of Sociological Studies*, with another selection of the papers presented into English.

In the end, I would like to express my special gratitude to the deputy editor of this *Journal* – Dr. Habil. Ecaterina Balica – and her team, for making possible the publication of this special issue, to the organisers and participants in our international conference in Romania, and also to the reviewers and the authors of this volume.