

A b s t r a c t s

Bogusław Bakula The key to Kiev

Kiev is searching for itself: it is once again travelling through a fogbound landscape, and occasionally a flash of lightning lights the way. The city is racing along the axis of time, unwinding the reel of history and then winding it in again, seizing hold at ever-increasing speed of the lost parts of time. It is completely preoccupied with the struggle for survival, but for the first time it seems that this is no longer a struggle in which life and death are at stake. One has to pay a price in order to visit Kiev, but one leaves the city richer for the experience.

Karla Hielscher “But the paths on which I travelled remain safe and intact...” Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, one hundred years on

Here they are, Chekhov's characters: the bloated, conformist, insensitive individuals who long ago lost any loftier desires they might have had, but also the sensitive, compassionate ones who suffer from a feeling of meaninglessness and who retain a desire to transcend this banal, empty world. With the extreme intensity of their feelings and their striving, their hopes and dreams, the questions they ask themselves and their self-questioning, the possibility of liberation becomes visible. In this way, the hope that deliverance may be possible becomes the structural centre of Chekhov's stories.

Rüdiger Ritter

One coat of arms, two states: the controversy between Lithuania and Belarus over the horseman motif, and the Belarussian discussion about the “correct” coat of arms for the state

Between 1991 and 1995, both Lithuania and Belarus had as part of their state coat of arms the motif of a horseman with sword and shield. This had been the state symbol of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the common predecessor of the two states. In Lithuania the horseman is still the state symbol, while in Belarus President Lukashenka replaced him in 1995 with other, neo-Soviet motifs. This step was accompanied by a public discussion about Belarus's place between East and West, an issue that has not yet been settled. In this discussion, history was both a method used in the construction of collective identity and a weapon in a political struggle.

Jakob Juchler

The EU? All right....

On the acceptance of EU membership in East-Central Europe

A clear majority of the citizens of the new EU member states favoured accession. Will this continue to be the case in future? An analysis of the acceptance that has been reflected in surveys of public opinion conducted during the last few years shows that it is largely based on cost-benefit considerations. There is very little socio-demographic variation in these findings. Differences across countries and oscillations over time, on the other hand, can be explained in terms of the influence of historical context on the current situation. The importance of calculations of cost suggests that the positive attitude to EU membership is most likely to decline in cases where high economic expectations are disappointed.

Eckart D. Stratenschulte

Farewell, ambiguity! The EU's new Neighbourhood Policy

The European Commission has put forward a strategy paper on the future shape of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), with the aim of structuring the relationship between the EU and its new immediate neighbours in the eastern areas of Europe and on the southern shores of the Mediterranean. In this context, the Commission rules out any idea of accession by these countries. The Commission wishes to conclude with each of these partner states an action plan, which would incorporate clear time schedules and conditions but is also designed to take account of the interests of the target country. In the long term the Commission would strive for the integration of these partner countries into the EU single market as well as into various EU programmes. Within the new EU budget period (2007 - 2013), considerably more money is to be made available for these partner countries than has so far been the case. The intention is to create a European Neighbourhood Instrument.