

VI. Honoured Personality

LAUDATIO

To Professor Jordan Gheorghe Bărbulescu, celebrating 60 years

Each of those seeking knowledge and professional development aspire to identify a mentor from whom to learn various skills of research, analysis and use of knowledge acquired. Often, those seeking such a mentor cannot find it and abandon the road to knowledge. However, there are situations when the mentor finds you and grants you with trust, time, hope, and even logistical and financial resources. As a result, the commitment of the advised person does not consist in occasional expressions of gratitude, but in a continuous and deepened research and development of knowledge held. In fact, according to some, the essence of mentoring is to generate and maintain knowledge transfer from one generation to another; according to others, mentoring is actually a ritual that has a much deeper human-constructivist part. According to the latter opinions, knowledge transfer is not mechanical or realized through mimetic methods, but through a long ritual, including steps such as identifying, testing, investing trust, openness and recognition. Voltaire said: "*There is no innate knowledge, for the same reason that there is no tree that bears leaves and fruit when it first starts above the earth*". The transfer of knowledge inheritance is actually made throughout this journey that can last even decades, and involves one of the most important aspects, namely knowledge symbiosis, a phenomenon eminently based on human relationships. The academic environment perpetuates and reinforces this approach for almost 1000 years and no contemporary interpretations have the power to change the meaning and logic of this ritual of initiation in the acquisition, processing, exploitation and dissemination of knowledge in its many forms. In fact, an effective and efficient developer of knowledge is also an excellent mentor, and hence the ritual is continuous and applicable to all those who identify their right place and time.



The mentor to whom we dedicate this *laudatio* is invaluable to the undersigned, not only because he respected and respects the aforementioned ritual, but because he knew how to identify for us the right time and place. We are referring to Professor Jordan Gheorghe Bărbulescu, which in 2012 has reached the honourable age of 60 years. His career and professional prestige indicate that he is not only an excellent teacher, but also a great diplomat who made a real contribution to Romania's accession to the European Union, disseminating knowledge about accession and integration of his own experience. Few universities in Romania have managed to outline study programmes (either specific master ones or general postgraduate ones) where the teaching activities are carried on by experts who contributed to the completion of the negotiations and accession to the European Union. In our – unbiased, we hope – opinion, one has to admit that the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration (SNSPA) in Bucharest has managed to achieve such an institutional success since its early beginnings and that Professor Bărbulescu contributed to

strengthening and maintaining this performance. Below we will share some professional facets we know and appreciate to the professor Iordan Bărbulescu.

Professor Bărbulescu was born on January 20, 1952 in Hunedoara. Between 1973 and 1978 he studied at the University of Bucharest, receiving a degree in philosophy. In 1996 he defended the thesis entitled "La preadhesion de los países de Europa Central a la Unión Europea, elemento clave de la unificación. El caso de Rumania" at the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU). The thesis was prepared under the direction of Professor Francisco AldecoaLuzarraga and, after more than 15 years since its defence, it proves to be a pioneering monograph on the deepening of European integration, an analysis from the perspective of Central and Eastern Europe countries.

Between 1991 and 2003 he was hired at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as diplomat, during this period serving as Deputy Director of the European Union Direction, Deputy Director of America Direction, Director of Latin America Direction, European Integration Embassy Counsellor, Embassy Minister Counsellor of Romania's Embassy in Madrid. In its work as a diplomat, Professor Iordan Gheorghe Bărbulescu actively participated to boost the process of negotiating the accession to the European Union. For example, significant contribution in this direction was taken before and during the Spanish Presidency of the EU Council in the first half of 2002, when Prof. Bărbulescu greatly contributed to the opening of nine negotiation chapters and provisionally closed three negotiation chapters. For his contribution to the foreign policy of Romania, Prof. Iordan Bărbulescu was awarded in 2002 the National Order "Faithful Service" in rank of "Knight". Nevertheless, he continued to contribute to boost negotiations and the preparation of the actual accession; therefore, in recognition for his 2007 efforts, he was awarded the "Personality of the Year for a European Romania" prize afforded by EUROLINK Foundation - House of Europe. Moreover, in order to exploit and disseminate knowledge held about deepening European integration, in June 2012 he was recruited by the European Commission Representation in Romania as a member of Team Europe – the European Commission's Network of independent conference speakers.

In addition to his diplomatic experience, Professor Bărbulescu excelled in the development and dissemination of knowledge through teaching activities at SNSPA, at the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHB) of Bilbao and at Complutense University of Madrid. At SNSPA, his teaching work can be seen in two stages: (a) the years 1997-1999, when he introduced within the Faculty of Political Sciences the courses "Institutions of the European Union" and "European Union Policies"; at the time, the courses were considered a pioneer in social and political sciences; (b) the second stage begins in 2003 and lasts to the present, during which Prof. Bărbulescu continued teaching the two before mentioned courses, but he also introduced new courses (taught in various academic curriculum arrangements and adapted for different categories of students) for bachelor and master programs: "EU Sectoral policies", "European Union: deepening and enlargement", "Romania's international relations", "Common Foreign and Security Policy", "Decision-making in the European Union", "Evaluation of EU policies", etc. Regarding his teaching in universities in Spain, one may also indicate two distinct periods (1992 - 1997 and 1999 -2003) and the fact that one of his second period course - "La preadhesión de los países de Europa central a la UE, una oportunidad histórica" - was highly appreciated by the Spanish academic community. In addition to university teaching, Professor Iordan Bărbulescu developed and taught specific courses on continuing vocational training for different Romanian ministries and government agencies/authorities, as well as for various foundations and associations. Here it is worth mentioning that in 2006-2009 he was the leader of the Jean Monnet Module "Change and Continuity in the European Governance",

and that since 2011 (until 2013) he is the leader of a similar Jean Monnet Module "Rights and Identities Beyond the State: Managing Diversity in the EU".

His professional prestige is fully recognized by current and former students. In this sense, as a landmark recognition and appreciation of the high degree of professionalism, during the last two years, Professor Bărbulescu ranks first among SNSPA university teachers coordinating doctoral studies, by the number of requests for coordination PhD thesis. The same situation is also identified for bachelor and master final papers, but in this respect, the phenomenon lasts for more than six years. The explanation is that, through the coordination process, professor Bărbulescu gives each student a particular attention, being supported in his coordination activity through a system of guidance through academic tutoring conducted by his young assistants. For his effort regarding the proper evaluation of students and for the high quality academic and professional guiding, in May 2011, the National Alliance of Student Organizations in Romania awarded Professor Iordan Gheorghe Bărbulescu the title "Bologna Professor".

Through curriculum and teaching innovation, Professor Iordan Bărbulescu has contributed to the expansion and development of curricula in International Relations and European Studies (RISE) area, both in SNSPA and in the partner faculties such as the Faculty of History, International Relations, Political Sciences and Communication Sciences from University of Oradea, or the Department of International Studies and Contemporary History of the Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, etc. Moreover, in order to develop the academic community in the field of International Relations and European Studies, along with teachers such as Ioan Horga, Adrian Ivan and Gheorghe Poede, and with a team of ambitious and dynamic young academics, he founded in 2010 the Romanian Association for International Relations and European Studies (ARRISE), where he was elected president. Through a several year effort, one will be able to achieve convergence in the RISE study programs so as to ensure greater diversification and complementarity in this area.

Another of his recent concerns regarding academic and curricular innovation can be identified within the approaches meant to develop the culture of evaluating domestic and EU policies and programmes. Together with Professor Adrian Miroiu and supported by a team of young academics, Professor Bărbulescu established the first master program in Romania in the Evaluation of European Policies and Programmes, which is now already experiencing the third generation of students enrolled and the potential extension and multiplication by the University of Oradea and University Babes-Bolyai in Cluj-Napoca. Moreover, to help institutionalize this culture of evaluation, Prof. Bărbulescu contributed to the development of specialized professional organizations; for example, he actively participated at the establishment of the Association for Developing Evaluation in Romania, where he is vice president. Noteworthy is also the fact that he is a member of the European Evaluation Society and a member of the Romanian Evaluation Association "Evalrom".

Words of appreciation and admiration can be addressed as well about his academic management work. Since 2006, Professor Bărbulescu is Dean of the Department of International Relations and European Integration from SNSPA. The appointment and subsequent election as Dean of the Department was undertaken in a very difficult time for this structure: master programmes exceeded by the requests of potential students, a small contingent of students, a high rate of abandonment, a difficult financial situation, etc. After taking over the dean position, his manager skills were noticed through substantial changes in the administration of the Department, identified by a significantly increase of the number of students, the development and accreditation of new masters programs, preparation of strategic partnerships with relevant employers in the area, recruiting young

collaborators with vision and energy in terms of teaching, research and promotion of the institution. Consequently, in the last four university years, the Department led by Professor Iordan Gheorghe Bărbulescu became the most dynamic academic structure within SNSPA, both in terms of sustainability of the study programmes and in terms of relations with the specific professional community. The SNSPA academic community recognized his abilities and skills of professional manager and, in February 2012, he was elected as President of the SNSPA Senate, so that currently he contributes to revival SNSPA as a national and regional renowned university on the governance topic.

Similarly, regarding the academic management area, one has to mention Professor Bărbulescu's active involvement in developing a culture of quality assurance in the Romanian Higher Education system. Thus, from 2007 to the present, he is part of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS) team of experts, holding the position of Secretary to the Commission "Political Science, Sociology, European Studies and Communication". Similarly, in June 2010, he was recruited as an international expert of the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Moreover, within the 2011 - 2012 period, he was a member of the Committee of sociology, political science and administration of the National Council for the Recognition of Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates – CNATDCU, as well as evaluator of the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding - UEFSCDI for the university and study programmes ranking exercise.

Concerning the research activity, it is noteworthy the quality of his books on the European integration topic, a total of 12 titles, among which the following: "EU: Deepening and Enlargement", "EU: From Economic to Political", "EU: From National to Federal", "Decision-making Process in the European Union". Furthermore, Prof. Bărbulescu has experience in over 25 research and institutional/systemic development projects, such as: " El papel integrador de Rusia en el territorio de la antigua URSS y la contribucion de la UE en la estabilidad del proceso: la gestion de la nueva Europe" or "Searching for an efficient adaptation of national legislation to European standards", "Institutional reconstruction in Romania. Challenges and trends in the context of EU accession", as well as Strategies and Policies Studies – "The Lisbon Treaty. Impact on Romanian Institutions and Policies" and "National coordination of European affairs. Mechanisms of collaboration in European affairs between the Government and the Parliament. Comparative study of EU Member States", the latter ones being prepared for the European Institute of Romania. As a recognition of his academic consistency, in 2010 Professor Iordan Bărbulescu was awarded the National Council of Scientific Research in Higher Education-CNCSIS prize for the article "References to God and the Christian Tradition in the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe: An Examination of the Background" (published in the *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 8 / 24/2009, ISI), co-authored with professor Gabriel Andreescu. Here we may recall the fact that since 2007 he is also the scientific coordinator (together with prof. Adrian Miroiu) of the Collection "Public Policy and European Integration" of Polirom Publishing House from Iași; here, under his guidance, there were published almost 10 titles in the European studies domain.

Rounding out the description of the accomplishments obtained during the past two decades, it is remarkable the international exposure of Professor Iordan Gheorghe Bărbulescu, both through the multiple specializations in European integration he pursued abroad, and through the conferences, courses and lectures he held in different European countries. It has to be appreciated his involvement in developing the field of European

studies in universities from the Republic of Moldova, by the academic coordination of the "Development of curriculum and improving university management in European Studies from Moldova" project, implemented by the Soros Foundation in Moldova.

In conclusion, we find that through his academic and professional work, as well as through his books and public appearances, Professor Iordan Gheorghe Bărbulescu contributed to the crystallization of a "Romanian voice" in the European debate related to vertical and horizontal development of the European Union, to its place in a globalized world, as well as to the place and role of Romania in the new Europe. We wish that many of those who seek knowledge development and to obtain professional prestige have such mentor as Professor Iordan Gheorghe Bărbulescu.

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