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## European Conservatism as a Present Political Ideology

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**Abstract:** The historical beginnings of conservative ideology were felt during the Revolution in France and the next decades that followed this event reference of modernity. The conservative thinking has evolved in the nineteenth century and in the early part of the twentieth century, it has experienced major changes in civilization and has known phenomena of crisis, identity and solutions, crisis that has exceeded it during the second of the last century, when it was restructured as neo-conservatism. Without having a single and concrete definition, conservatism has always represented all those who declare themselves political partisans to any social system, is concerned to ensure the continuity of social and political order, historically legitimated and strive to reject revolutions that would, inevitably, change it. The conservatism peculiarity was highlighted by rejecting the ideological organization of any systematization form of its ideas, because society can be organized by appealing to programs and theories. Conservatism is the political and social doctrine which renders the system a conservative spirit, focused on the ideal of social order and stability. Modern conservatism, located at the right of liberalism, was and shall remain the doctrinal and ideological opponent of all systems of ideas that are situated on the scale policy guidelines on its left. While tradition is indispensable for the existence of conservatism, it was forced to adapt to modern requirements and to modernize itself over time, maintaining however the main features that characterizes it.

**Keywords:** conservatism; political doctrine; European construction; tradition

### 1. The Definition of Conservatism

The term “conservatism” is part of the semantic field of the verb “conserve” which means to keep, to preserve, to save; “conservator of a museum”, the usual significance in the nineteenth-century French vocabulary and then in the Romanian one, known because penetrates in Romanian through the French branch.<sup>3</sup> The conservatism is considered both a political vision as well as a way of being, an ideology that focuses on “the historical identity of the people, the spiritual realities and unlike the leftist vision, is not intended as denial, but the affirmation of values, their conservation”<sup>4</sup>. Thus the conservatism is one of three significant political ideologies in the last two centuries Occident, along with liberalism and socialism. The etymology of the term ideology comes from the Greek word “eidos” = image and “logos” = science, meaning learning about ideas (Nisbet, 1998, p. 19). The ideology is a wealth of

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<sup>3</sup><http://filosofiepolitica.wordpress.com/elemente-de-doctrina/partidul-conservator/istoria-partidului-conservator/>.

<sup>4</sup><http://facultate.regielive.ro/cursuri/stiinte-politice/conservatorismul-istorie-universala-1952.html>.

coherent and explanatory ideas which evaluate social conditions, helping people to understand the place they occupy in society, aiming to tradition survival, the people themselves.

But the conservative idea does not imply a full and uncensored attachment towards any tradition; this doesn't assume the old, decrepit and Manichean equation "traditional = good, new = bad". The conservative attitude should not be confused with any reactionary attitude and is not based on inversed utopia of past iteration. The conservatism axis is not an absolute rule and sacrosanct character of traditions, but only the ancestry and necessity of traditions; they constitute the essential framework of functioning of any "rational" social arrangements. Conservatism is a special kind of traditionalism. The "rational" principle losses any value when tradition hasn't created consensus on its meaning and applicability. And when it can be applied successfully, it is not because of the principle itself, its universal validity, but the public consensus supporting its functioning. Specifically, traditions legitimize any form of social order.

Those who are followers of this ideology are called conservatives. The term "conservative" simply means "preserver, who refuse to change, loyal to the currently existing ordinances" (Nemoianu, 2000, p. 75). This represents a first sense of the term. A second sense of it partially overlaps with "traditionalism", so Karl Mannheim defined conservatism as a "traditionalism becoming aware". Therefore, the conservative thinking falls within the ascendancy and need of traditions. There is a third meaning of the word "conservative" which exemplifies the effort to synthesize freedom and tradition. The latter sense appeared due to the impact of modernization that was felt at all levels (economic, social, moral, political etc.). The Great writers and thinkers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were concerned about how people will perceive these changes and will best respond to the evolution of society. According to John Gray, conservatives admit that before anything else, even before freedom, people need a home, a group of institutions and a way of life that they feel theirs. (Gray, 1998, p. 142).

Regarding the conservative relations with the other two political ideologies, liberalism and socialism, the first one reproaches them that they advocate for community life settlement on the basis of deliberate "rational" arrangements as institutions, organizational structure, legal, political or moral regulations which are deducted from intellectual abstractions: principles, ideals, theories. (Mungiu-Pippidi, 1998, p. 76).

Hence the conservative ideology doesn't have clear principles and it can't adapt to the policy based on it. The difference between conservatives and liberals can be shown by the fact that the latter believe in the rationality of certain principles such as the principle of maximum individual equal freedom and the principle of reducing freedom to equality, and require achieving peace and society consensus upon themselves; while conservatives believe that rational principles doesn't control nor determine public consensus, but their value and validity is determined by it.

Therefore, conservatism is guided by the belief that there are no "for granted" prefabricated solutions, to human community problems, or universal principles to solve them, because they have limited and local validity and nobody and nothing guarantees their future success to solve problems. Therefore, conservatism is guided by the belief that there are no "for granted" prefabricated issues of human communities or universal principles to solve them, because they have limited validity local and nobody and nothing guarantees their success in future to solve the problems of the kind they have solved previously. (Mungiu-Pippidi, 1998, p. 76).

The conservative solutions are adaptive because they seek practical effectiveness, possible only by analyzing the problem and adapting the solutions to the existing reality at a given time. Hence the

adaptive dimension of conservatism. The conservatism is focusing its effort not on building ideal models of social “rational” arrangement the conception of norms, rules, principles, ideals that govern social existence, but on the pragmatic objective of material and spiritual life forms development and optimization. The own political conservatism does not consist in nothing more than the usual “daily” practice, of problem solving of a human community being a “policy of imperfection” and compromise. Conservatism is not but a political pragmatism. The conservative pragmatism involves a huge skepticism regarding the economical mechanisms samples, algorithm-solutions that only needs to be applied correctly, as typical models, policy prescriptions. In the absence of universal principles and formulas, the question arises: how can conservatism aspire to an active political involvement overcoming obstacles facing the community? On one hand, by rethinking each problem-situation based on its particular, specific features. The result of this rethinking is, of course, a proposal for solving; but not one taken from a previous tank-type solutions, but one focused on a pragmatic ad hoc arrangement, based on data specific to the situation; conservative solutions are nothing more than pragmatic adaptive arrangements. The social assistance system helping disadvantaged members of the community came into being as such adaptive arrangements (they are due not to socialists, but British Conservatives who have started it in the second half of the nineteenth century). The conservative solutions are adaptive not for pursuing to perpetuate the existing situation, but pursuing the practical effectiveness, impossible to achieve without adapting to local peculiarities. The conservatism is, under this aspect, a political realism. In addition to adaptive size, conservatism has a critical dimension. It requires social barriers, not by inventing panaceas, but by criticizing any panaceas. The fabrication of panacea and universal recipes is a permanent inclination of thinking, and this inclination is manifested more intensely when both the problems and human suffering are more acute.

Conservatism cannot rely on anything other than experience. Realistic, critical thinking of a pragmatic type has no other source of inspiration than experience. David Hume, one of the founding fathers of the conservative vision says that the experience has the merit of warning us of its own reliability. The conservative pragmatism as well as the tendency to critically react to any universal recipe or canonical principles determine another very significant feature: contextualism. A well-known example in this respect is offered by the attitude of the UK Conservative Party to exercise state control of the economy; in the context of 1830, his attitude was favorable to maintain this control, so that in the context of 1890, to became negative. The conservative policies have in common the idea of moderation and gradual growth, not the one with radical and sudden change.

Conservatism is of course a gradualism; but not because it had horror of the sudden change in itself, but out of a sense of reality: for he does not believe that anything important (i.e., rooted in a form of a human life) can be changed abruptly.

So, to be conservative means having a supportive attitude of the old political, economic and cultural forms. This political doctrine defends traditional order, having political beliefs supporting the gradual development at the expense of sudden changes.

## **2. Conservatism as a Current Ideology of the EU Area**

We considered necessary to explain the term ideology in general to show how conservatism is viewed as a current ideology of the EU area. The original meaning of ideology, in the eighteenth century, when the term appeared, was represented by the scientific study of ideas. The word “ideology” is the invention of a French scholar Antoine Destutt de Tracy (1754-1836), who attempted in the 1790s and early 1800s to found the systematic study of the ideas origins. (Ball, Dagger, 2000, p. 19)

The term “political ideology” represents all systematic and structured the ideas that, generic and functional are representative for the interests, aspirations and political expectations of a group or social class and who reflect the socio-political reality, to report people to this social-historical reality based on experience of the said group and from which results rules of political behavior and political action guidelines. (Tanăsescu, 2004, p. 66)

Karl Marx (1818- 1883), a German philosopher, economist and publicist who deal with the same theme as Tracy, spoke about the concept of ideology as a set or system of ideas whose function was to justify and legitimize the company management by the ruling class. The latter differs from one society to another, but there will always be the class which controls the material forces. The ideology masks the management of this class by presenting existing social relations as being normal, natural, necessary and eternal.

According to Mannheim, the knowledge sociology requires us to make a distinction between the concepts of “total” and “particular” ideology. In his opinion, the term “particular conception” is used when we say that the ideas and positions of a group of people whom we oppose, such as political parties or interest groups are “ideological”. “The overall concept” on ideology, by contrast, refers to characteristic ways of thinking of a whole class or society or historical periods such as medieval society or the modern age.

Extending the concept therefore, Mannheim made it more difficult to define ideology, the term becoming too vague to be useful, this being the prospect of some social analysts of the twentieth century. Therefore, for many people, the term "ideology" remains a pejorative one. In their concept, ideologies are not good because it always simplifies and distorts the problem. Even worse, ideologists encourages its supporters to believe that their ideology has monopoly over the truth. Those who disagree are enemies that stand in the way of truth, justice and progress - an enemy who either must be convinced or defeated. (Ball & Dagger, 2000, p. 22)

One of the most important components of community for conservatism is tradition, because is trying to continuously improve the human condition through it. Although tradition is indispensable for the existence of conservatism, it was forced to adapt to the modern requirements and to modernize it over time. For this reason, appeared a new type of conservatism. The instruments used by it are freedom of the press and autonomous associations in all areas, the aim being to create a conservative spirit from the good ones, a spirit against innovation and “hasty” improvisation on the intellectual and social field. In order to implement a new conservatism, an attempt was made to remove the destructive tendencies of mass democratic society by expanding civil society sector, preserving certain values determined to save the intellectual and moral integrity of each and every one. In other words, it was meant to save the individual from the tyranny of the majority and gain autonomy of civil society in the detriment of the bureaucratic apparatus oppressor generated by the mass democratic society.

### **3.1. The Conservative Doctrine in the European Union**

The European Union is currently the political and legal environment in which takes place the European integration process as well as the form under which is constituted and stands political--legal, economic, social and cultural construction - the essential kernel, engine of the European unity, around which a number of increasingly large countries of the world, of primary importance in international life. (Anghel, 2007, p. 4)

The European Union is an international entity officially published on the international scene in 1993 with the entry into force of a treaty signed a few months earlier in the Netherlands by several western states. This treaty recorded the participating States willingness to strengthen economic, social and political links between them to achieve a union of growing ties between the European people. (Ghica, 2007, p. 25)

In terms of conservatism within the European Union, at first, it fell under the clear influence of Romanticism, seaming that this is the doctrine ideological destiny. Its political dimension was not profoundly different from that of its ancestors, only radicalizing its position regarding state liberalism, which was supposedly highly inappropriate in the manifestation of social freedom (meaning that the default social hierarchy was not accepted anymore, minimizing the nobility role in the society construction, especially after the emergence of popular parliaments). Also, the religious position became, both in the UK and Germany, highly percussive, perceiving modernity as a permanent spiritual revolution, but not necessarily beneficial. Through romanticism, conservatism becomes imagine of a strong current, permeated by ideological direction of the ruling classes, idea not altogether true, but apparently highly pertinent. Through romanticism, conservatism makes the condoning of country life, the peasant family, traditionally medieval, capable of simple happiness of continuity compared with the proletarian and petty bourgeoisie class, which is in a permanent cultural or national identity crisis and manages to take over the nationalist dimension of liberalism.

Conservatism assumes the national dimension of the party that opposes the liberal state attempt to broaden the nation's citizen base since 1830, the official birth year of the Conservative Party in the UK. For conservatives, the return to the national community was paramount, no longer assuming the risk posed by the contrast between rich and poor, which could lead to the destruction of the English nation, which could barely be formed at all.

A great reformer of conservatism, Disraeli, claimed the nationalism with strong social focus. Its proposed reform strongly influenced the British and European society in the middle of the nineteenth century. He established government bodies or state guarantees to ensure workers' pensions, social assistance for children and disadvantaged people, compulsory schools etc. In addition, he obtained British unemployment reduction, so that the British workers would lead a better life both materially and politically. The applied conservatism by the Conservative Party in Britain after Disraeli, has developed a policy with strong paternalistic overtones which allowed the posting of the Liberal Party and also the entrance in competition with the Labor Party.

Of course not in all countries conservatism had exactly the same behavior. In Central and East European countries, the conservative parties played an important role in the cleavage of land owners versus agricultural workers. Their role was less modernized than Western conservatives, being considered rather reactionaries than modernizers, issue that persists today in the perspective of the generally conservatism.

Starting with the twentieth century, the main ideological opponent of conservatism becomes the socialism. In the first instance, conservatism is in a rather difficult situation in relation to socialism which at that time was the bearer of an ideology extremely attractive and seemingly fair. Then, the organization of the Party was completely new and stable (mass party model) having an electoral body dedicated to the Party, led by unions and, finally, a stable ideology proposing radical transformation of the state. To these realities, the conservatives could not answer it only with the old political and moral principles of the nineteenth century. Secondly, the Socialists gave the appearance of a trans-European political union, while conservatives from each country refer only to their political society, without

statutory links between the various parties, and after World War I a large part of the conservative parties on the continent disappeared. The conservative idea however did not disappear, but attempted once more to adapt to the new society. In the interbellum period, conservatism had an extremely difficult situation especially in relation with fascism, that he ideologically intensified it, and tried in some cases even to assume it, particularly in cases from countries within Central Europe - Poland, Slovakia and Hungary.

This ideological distortion marked the era after World War II, when it became very heavy the destruction of conservative connotations. However, in this era, the conservatism, either in opposition (most often) or in power begins to build a new identity and economic policy that will become effective in the 50s, identity that will mark forever its image.

The conservatives have placed their resistance to collectivist and scheduler socialism, calling upon the indissoluble link between economic and political freedom. They believed that despite ideological prejudices, capitalism is the only form of economy that leads to happiness, for it is the only fair and free economic form. The socialism, in his desire to equalize the whole society, led to injustice and poverty due to economic planning and excessive bureaucratization of society. Those who promoted this type of current political and economic theory were not necessarily members of a conservative party, but their theory was quickly embraced by conservatives who build a new political dimension based on these ideas, which, in short time have been implemented by the governments of conservative families.

The Romanian conservatism resembles European conservatism in general. But, unlike liberalism, it is claimed also from a Romanian reality of its own in its own traditions. Even partially, it inherits the ruling class ideology of the Romanian Principalities.

The connection to the modern era of Romanians and their Northand West neighbors has no special significance. When Romanians entering modernity and seeks close contact with Western civilization, they set it directly with the British, French, Germans, Austrians, without intermediaries. The European Union has designated its own motto in 2000: "Unity in Diversity". For its elections, a contest was held in the European Union schools, with the participation of 80,000 young people aged between 10 and 20 years. Finally, were selected six proposals and the European Parliament decided which one will be adopted. The winning creators' nationality remained secret so far. (Neguț, 2007, p. 14)

The term conservatism has undergone a denigration in the last centuries of European history and civilization. A denigration promoted by both the winning liberalism and democracy, and also by the left and the extreme left ideologies. The term conservatism has served as antithesis to progress and became more or less an insult. It's also true that there have been successful conservative analysis in a constructive way. The most important come from British and German culture.

All conservatives share the desire to preserve something, usually the traditions and customs of their society. However, as a distinct political position, conservatism is more than a simple desire to oppose change. For example, the classic conservatives defended the traditional social hierarchy, insisting on a government strong enough to direct people's passions and they were skeptical of the attempts to promote individual freedom and equal opportunities in a competitive society. Regarding the Conservatives at the end of the twentieth century, they are individualists, pleading for reducing the government size and aims, to let individuals to freely compete for profits. This conservative current actually resembles to classical or neoclassical liberalism. The human belief of conservatives is that human beings are and will always be weak. Many call conservatism as a "political philosophy of

imperfection”<sup>1</sup>. People are not as smart as they think, and their reason is not able to anticipate all the decisions consequences. Therefore, the best intentions often end up causing the greatest harm.

In the twentieth century, conservatives were against mainstream society, not welcoming with enthusiasm, the change felt at the time. From their point of view, it first lead society to chaos, then to despotism. They believed that in any society there is a small group that is suitable to govern, through capabilities, experience and temperament, while the whole is totally inappropriate. Therefore, conservative supporters opposed leveling, the main characteristic of mass society because they were suspicious of attempts to reach a large democracy or equality. Cultural leveling is as dangerous as financial leveling. But nevertheless, although initially antidemocratic, conservatives have supported democracy in societies where it evolved and became a part of the social fabric, of the traditional and customary way of life.

### **3.2. The Conservatism in France**

In this country, the first political parties appear with the 1879 Revolution, but they will exist only for a short period of time, because most of these “parties” were extremely divided and there is no actors’ consensus regarding the constitutional framework. In a rather odd way, the French parties are born much later, even though is assumed that democratic and partisan expression is born and function together. Thus, since the 20s, in France appear "five political families' constant on the political scene: communist, socialist, radical, on the center-right - Christian-democratic and on the right - conservative. In the eighteenth century, conservative groups represented the nobility and Church image. They were formed to fight against the principles of the French Revolution and to defend the old regime, representing the historical right. Conservatism was inclined to a kind of aristocratic populism, founded on the idea of traditional forces and undivided loyalty of the people opposing the bourgeoisie (the Liberals), in its turn detested by the Jacobins. But in the nineteenth century with the advent of labor movements, they were directed toward liberalism, although they opposed it, arguing the nobility. Conservative Party appears as a party of competence, intelligence and reason: a party of teachers, like Guizot, and publishers, like Thiers.

Conservatives had great respect for the Church, this being, according to them the order, hierarchy and discipline and having a role of social cohesion, which could maintain peace among all citizens.

In most of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, France was ruled by “moderates”. There is some ambiguity between the terms “conservative” and “moderate” but these terms cannot be avoided. They belong to the same political spectrum and are easier to practically place than to define from a theoretical point of view. However, when dealing with this problem, not from a philosophical standpoint, but from a political one, conservatism (moderate attitude) defines itself, not in theoretical terms, but in terms of the problems it faces. From all this, it is clear the radicals’ tendencies to declare themselves conservatives, i.e. those revolutionaries who have achieved their purpose to defend the new order. But while people and parties attitudes changes with their policy, the doctrines evolves slower.

This gives us the apparent paradox of liberal conservatives, radical conservatives, of social-democrats conservatives, even of the communists’ conservatives, especially when the groups’ representatives obtain satisfaction and power. After 1920, took place the Communist Party founding, which would

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.sferapoliticii.ro/sfera/153/art05-Gherasim.html>.

both complicate and simplify the political situation, the Conservatives in power, no longer being able to react over their own extremists as strongly as against the left ones.

Over time, it was formed several right-wing parties which were based on a fundamental conservatism and the cult for discipline, on a parade violence expressed by noise, offices and meetings of the political opponents attack, plenty demagoguery and only a few leaders. But in 2002, these parties have joined and founded the Union for a Popular Movement. This new right political movement has more ideological influences, such as: conservatism, Christian Democracy and liberalism; unfortunately it retains its tradition in Gaullism, republicanism, populism and radicalism. The first president of the Union for a Popular Movement party was Alain Juppe, but he was forced to resign on 15 July 2004 after allegations of corruption, and on 29 November 2004, Nicolas Sarkozy, finance minister at that time, takes over the party presidency.

Thus, through this movement is tried to reduce unemployment, economic freedom, solidarity and equality from the state. Starting with May 2002, it was felt the development of the extreme right, but the French political system exceeded the enlargement policy period, returning to bipolarity. That formula of coexistence between the presidential and parliamentary majority, removed “the opposition” from the French political life, and in 2007, we witness to domination from the right over the important institutions (at central and local level).

Currently, France's conservative attitude is manifested by rejection of modern ideas and a very libertine behavior. Disagreeing with the management judgments, the French conservative struggle for justice and their welfare using street demonstrations. The problems facing France today are of economic and social type. For example, most of today's French people recognize that raising the retirement age is necessary to ensure the survival of pension system but nevertheless, according to all public opinion polls, almost 70% of the French support the demonstrators who had come out in the street to block small reforms introduced by the government of President Nicolas Sarkozy.

The French attitude is a product of combining the unique political and intellectual history and a rejection attitude of elites who are currently in power, the French people demonstrating their extremely conservative inclinations. Their resistance to changes reflects their denial of reality to some extent. Nowadays the French passion for equality is far greater than the passion for freedom and thus threaten the country's prosperity. French have not decided whether to continue to defend the old world or to face the challenges of a globalized world. Their hesitation is a source of confusion for most and a source of admiration for some. The fact is that it seems easier to explain than to understand their behavior.

### **3.3. The Conservatism in the UK**

In this state, conservatism has rejected the ideological organization and any form of systematization of its ideas because society cannot be organized by resorting to programs and theories. However, with the introduction of universal suffrage the electoral pressure pressing on all political parties led the Conservatives to answer the moment call by providing clear principles and initiatives. Thus, the ideological outline of conservatism went on throughout the twentieth century.

The British Conservatives remain mistrustful of any positivist who in the form of some law recommends systematic actions which should be taken to achieve social welfare. Instead, the conservative thinking is particularly receptive to the benefits that tradition brings.

Conservatives do not believe there are formulations applied to achieve good governance.



The Government is a social, indigenous product and therefore must respect the history, customs and prejudices of the people. Thus, as there can't be no social welfare laws, there can't be no ideology that would provide it. Therefore, conservatism was against any ideology, refusing to form a political program, showing preference for *passeisme* and lessons of past history. The most important of conservative reactionaries, Count Joseph de Maistre, went so far as to reject the idea that people are able to plan and establish a proper constitution of their society. A written constitution is downright dangerous, says de Maistre because expose the Government weaknesses: "The more is wrote, the institutions becomes weaker, the reasons being obvious. The laws are only declarations of rights, and rights are declared only when they are attacked, thus, the multiplicity of written constitutional laws only shows the multitude of conflicts and danger of destruction." (Țăranu, 2005, p. 43).

Maistre's words remain emblematic of what was British conservatism until the early twentieth century. The fear of any form of systematization led the British conservatives declare that their party has no ideological basis. They realized that the lack of political deals and critique brought to the mass society could no longer provide, under the system of universal suffrage, the party maintenance in power.

The early twentieth-century finds in the first instance the British conservatism in a rather difficult situation in relation to socialism, which at that time was the bearer of an ideology extremely attractive and seemingly fair. In front of the mass parties, conservatism, with the old political and moral principles could no longer respond to a reality that does not comply with the old models of political organization of society. Under the pressure of universal suffrage, conservatives are forced to respond to the needs of doctrinal clarity required by the electorate.

But eventually, they returned to the principles that define them and especially to liberal values from the early nineteenth century, adapting and reevaluating them for the British society after War World II. The conservative tradition has become an ideological commitment giving doctrinal clarity of which the party needed to compete in the election of the twentieth century. The head of the Conservative Party today is William Hague, elected in 1997. He introduced the principle of party leadership election by members, trying to rejuvenate the party, to make it more attractive to young voters and to increase the number of its members. The current Conservative Party members are former students of private schools, working in private firms. Over 90% of them are owners of housing and a quarter have consistent income. For example, in 1994, they earned more than £ 30,000 per year.

Many members of the Conservative Party in the UK have expressed Euroscepticism over time, being slightly more reluctant to everything that the EU means. For example, from the perspective of Conservatives, the UK will never adopt the euro, even more, it definitely should leave the European Union.

Thus the danger for Britain to leave the EU is not imminent, but a positive vote would show how little faith was left in the island for the European project, given that Europe is facing the biggest crisis since the establishment of the common market. Regarding this issue, in 2010, the Conservatives have declared their willingness to vote for the referendum, but the motion was rejected by Parliament.

But recently, the Conservative Party in Britain confirmed that it will leave the European People's Party - European Democrats, the largest group in the European Parliament. Although the British Conservative Party stands to remain in the European Union, more and more British Conservative parliamentarians keep their skepticism. Until now there has been speculation that after this event, the British Conservatives may join the Union for a Europe of Nations (UEN), second-minded conservative political group in the European Parliament. The change magnitude in mindset and policies that were generated by the Conservative Party is remarkable. This is due to the extremely difficult legacies left

by the Labor Party and the fact that it failed to form a majority government, recurring, to create a coalition with the Liberal Democrats, which was not seen with good eyes by the more right-sided members within the Party. Moreover that this coalition has required certain concessions from conservatives, the most significant being electoral reform on proportional representation, although it is not known which will be the political price paid by the Liberal Democrats for cohabitation with the Conservative Party. Defending the coalition in the eyes of its own party and the conservative electorate was the first cornerstone of the Conference slogan "Together for the national interest". The second one, not less important, is the need to support a broad policy for extraordinary austerity measures that are needed to reduce the budget deficit and reform institutions.

Social benefits will be reduced substantially, even at the beginning of the Conference, starting with allowances for children in families where one parent earns more than 43,875 pounds. Primarily the Conservatives intend to cut public spending by 83 billion pounds by 2014 and drastically reduce social benefits, although this aim cannot be achieved without freezing wages, a bigger contribution of the workers on the pension fund etc. The extremely unpopular measures are presented as the only solution for the people revival and the country's revival. This coalition is designed as a fact in the country's interest fighting for public exposure of the indecent high wages, salary cuts of Ministers, reducing taxes, imposing restrictions on banks so that they relieve the benefits of managerial staff and to convenient credit the small enterprises, etc. Consequently, in the UK, conservatism had the best conditions of manifestation, it being against the deep integration in the European Union. The British conservatism fits into an established regime, that defends its aristocratic character, people in the UK saying the following: "We are members of the European Union not by necessity, but by our act of will".<sup>1</sup>

### **3.4. The Conservatism in Finland**

Finland (Suomi Finnish, Swedish Finland) or the Republic of Finland (Suomentasavalta, Republiken Finland) is a country in Northern Europe, an EU member since 1995, the United Nations and the Eurozone<sup>2</sup>. The Finnish Civil War was a conflict between the forces of "red" (Social Democrats allied with Finnish communists) and the "whites" (under the command of conservative Senate, who in the previous autumn succeeded to form a national unity government, which had the goal of maintaining the status quo (to maintain independence and constitutional monarchy).

Civil war and war are still two of the most controversial and emotionally charged events in the modern history of Finland. These two conflicts are seen as two turning points of Finnish destiny, having a huge impact on both domestic and foreign policy. The causes that led to the Civil War can be considered to be primarily the political polarization caused by major conflict between the Russian Empire and the Grand Duchy of Finland, an autonomous entity of the Tsarist Empire, which began in 1889 with the launch of pan-Slav policy and has intensified in 1899 with the first attempts of Russification of Finland. One of the first consequences of this policy was the abolition of the Grand Duchy of Finland army.

Until that moment, Senate of Finland managed to successfully lead a conservative loyalist policy towards Russia, aimed at defending the national interests of the country through main autonomy granted by the Tsarist power. It was appreciated at that time that "the people" should be removed from

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<sup>1</sup><http://revistacultura.ro/nou/2012/02/ghici-cine-are-dreptate/>.

<sup>2</sup><http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finlanda>.

radical political approaches, which would lead to the Imperial Court irritation in St. Petersburg. As this policy in the end proved to be wrong, both the activity of the left and the right have been radicalized.

True is a political party of a populist guidance in Finland, founded in 1995 after the dissolution of the Finnish Rural Party. In the late 2000s, the True Finns have changed the balance between Finnish centrist parties increasing in popularity due to their Eurosceptic policy. Its leader is Timo Soini. In the 2011 elections, the True Finns have become a serious threat to traditional parties in the Parliament of Finland, achieving similar scores like the National Coalition Party, Centre Party and the Social Democratic Party of Finland in polls. The party combines economic policies of the extreme left, with some powerful conservative social values. Today, after a period of 30 years, Finland has a new conservative president. Sauli Niinistö, the National Coalition candidate (conservative) is the new president of Finland. His opponent Pekka Haavisto admitted its defeat. Either of the two would have won, the result would have been historical for Finland, which was managed in the last 30 years by social democratic presidents. Niinistö will most likely have a peaceful coexistence with the Social Democrats. In April, his party won the most votes in legislative elections and his Conservatives lead a broad coalition government, which also includes the Social Democrats.<sup>1</sup> Finland's parliamentary elections marked a sharp increase in electorate preferences of nationalists, who stood by against the anti-European and immigration program.<sup>2</sup> Liberal Conservatives in Finland obtained 20% of the voters voting options in the legislative elections that took place on 05.02.2012. They were followed by the Social Democrats, with 19.1% and the True Finns Party nationalists, with 19%. On the fourth place is situated Centre Party, with 15.8% of the voting options. Out of the 200 seats for the Parliament, the Election Commission has granted 44 to Conservatives, 42 to Social Democrats and 39 to True Finnish Party (right nationalist). On the other hand, also in 2012 the Conservatives remains the largest ideological group in the US. Following a research it has been reached a result whereby 40% of Americans continue to describe their perspective as conservative, 5% describe themselves as moderate and 21% liberal. This is the third year in which the number of conservatives surpassed that of the moderates, after a decade in which statistics indicated a close competition between the two groups.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The Romanian conservatism resembles the European one, by claiming it, through its own reality and traditions. Unfortunately, prominent representatives of the current managed only partially to set social policy formulations. Speaking purely doctrinaire, they have excelled and there isn't, with few exceptions, works with ideological content, programs, platforms etc. In the past, it was put great emphasis on elocution (let's not forget that most politicians of that time lacked training in the legal field). Therefore, we discover rather an ideological orientation, clearly articulated, and less a doctrine itself, as a coherent system of principles, completed with key programmatic documents. In order to make quality policy, it is vital that it is done in accordance with a moral policy. The latter implies efficiency, the ability to fulfill the promises the power understood as a means, not as an end. For the true politician, holding power is the chance in fulfillment of national interest of electoral commitments and not an exercise in itself or, worse, a display of its own pride. The countries where we find traditional conservative parties are Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. They are characterized by a moderate opposition to state intervention in social and economic life, having a consensual approach to policymaking. The political parties of a conservative type are more important than the

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.adevarul.ro/international/finlanda-presedinte-homosexual\\_0\\_640736348.html#](http://www.adevarul.ro/international/finlanda-presedinte-homosexual_0_640736348.html#).

<sup>2</sup>[http://www.romania-actualitati.ro/conservatorii\\_finlandezi\\_castigatorii\\_alegerilor\\_legislative-28046](http://www.romania-actualitati.ro/conservatorii_finlandezi_castigatorii_alegerilor_legislative-28046).

Christian Democratic parties in many cases them being equivalent to Christian Democracy in electoral options. Both the Christian Democrats and conservative parties represent alternatives to governance and social-democratic ideologies. The development of two political families within the same political system is rather an exception. Where there is strong conservatism, Christian democratic family is often implicit as an ideology or does not exist. UK, Scandinavia, Greece, Spain are examples of situations in which, if the family is strong conservative, cancels the Christian Democratic family. Austria, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands are examples of the opposite situation: where the Christian Democracy is strong, the conservative family is weak or not at all represented. In conclusion, conservatism is an important trend that manifests itself in many countries within the European Union, ensuring in this way a harmonious combination of tradition with modernity, supporting democracy in societies where it is installed.

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