

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEMATIC SECTION

The present issue of *Studia z Prawa Wyznaniowego* (*Studies in Law on Religion*) contains a selection of articles presented at the conference of the international scientific network EUREL (<http://www.eurel.info/?lang=en>) hosted by the Faculty of Language and Literature, Humanities, Arts and Educations of the University of Luxembourg (September 29-30, 2016) on the topic of Governance and Religion. In particular, the articles are related to two major sub-fields of interest: a) Religion, Party Discourse, and Policy-Making; and b) Religion in Legislation and Law Enforcement.

As regards the first sub-field, the focus is on the partial deconstruction of the traditional party system in contemporary times and the subsequent alteration of the systemic interaction between the political actors and religious institutions. Taking into consideration that the religious communities have the potential to mobilise their members in politically influential ways and to ally themselves with political parties, which may advocate their agenda not solely on the basis of ideology, but also with regard to expected electoral effects, the articles aim: a) at identifying the representation of religious issues within the ideological structure of the various political actors; and b) at examining the influence of the religious organizations on policy making both at the national and the European level, putting special emphasis on the rise

of populist movements and their religious agendas. To this end, the articles elaborate on the impact of the parties' religious discourse, as well as how religion influences party politics as a factor for reformulating the parties' cultural and moral agenda.

In particular, Niki Papageorgiou examines the new political landscape in Greece after the election of the leftist Syriza party (January 2015), core ideological feature of which has been the separation between Church and State. Chara Karagiannopoulou presents how the Greek Press narrates the (un)veiling debate that takes place in France and Turkey and questions whether the ideological orientation of the newspapers under discussion affects the presentation of the pro and (or) contra argumentation that it provides. Guillaume Silhol focuses on the redefinition of Catholic Religious Education in Italian State schools from compulsory religious instruction into a non-compulsory discipline of "religious culture," analysing how the issue was framed and negotiated by political, religious and educational actors between 1974 and 1984. Last, Mihai Murariu explores the discourse of the populist movement known as "Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the Occident" (PEGIDA), arguing that the group's emergence is symptomatic of the accelerated disintegration of the political establishment, and might be considered as a manifestation of a deepening commitment by European nativist factions, as well as a result of an increasing political polarisation.

The second sub-field under discussion in this issue (Religion in Legislation and Law Enforcement) aims at tracing the religious as well as the anti-religious arguments in both legislative acts and case law. In particular, the articles explore: a) the interaction of religious communities pursuing their interests in regard to legislation regulating their own position; b) the official involvement of religious communities in the enforcement of law; and c) the limitations of religious freedom. Within this framework, Tania Pagotto analyses the latest ECHR jurisprudence related to the «living together» issue, and investigates its significance in the light of the need of religious pluralism in the European States. Fabienne Bretscher elaborates on the field of public education in Switzerland, examining how decisions on Muslims' complaints alleging an unjustified restriction of their religious practices are influ-

enced by the political environment. Last but not least, Claire Aguilon elaborates on the concept of religious freedom and its direct impact on regulating the operation of the religious sphere.

The EUREL Conference held in the University of Luxembourg within the context of the Internal Research Project 2015, entitled *Party Politics and Religion in the European Union*, and the financial support of the Government of Luxembourg (Ministère d'Etat), brought new evidence in relation to the analysis of the influence of religion within the social space, both in terms of law as well as of politics. We are grateful to all the participants, the conference committee and Luxembourg University, as well as the journal editors for accepting the articles for publication.

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