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The First Decade of Lithuania in the European Union: between Meta-Political Values and “Pragmatic” Politics***

At present, the accommodative and technocratic policy of Europe, dominant in Lithuania (as well as in the European Union), is pushing Lithuania (and the European Union) to the margins of global politics, and it reflects the inability to fight for Lithuania's meta-political interests in the European Union and the region. With a decade of its membership in the European Union at hand, Lithuania has not yet formulated a strategic vision of its presence in the European Union; all the previous attempts to develop such a strategy have been exhausted or failed; meanwhile the strategic capabilities of Lithuania are consistently weakening. The main objective of this article is to enrich the current technocratic policy with a meta-political, values-based, strategic dimension. Seeking the best feasible alternatives for the horizontal and fragmented level of Lithuania's studies on Europe, the researcher has consciously chosen the European policy of the Holy See which stands out as to its verticality, capability to maintain the continuity of its principles and essential goals and its impact on the formation of Europe itself. It is an attempt to find the most general attitude to the European Union perspective which is lacking in the current discussions on European policy in Lithuania and in the policy itself. Christian meta-politics provides Lithuania with a possibility to consciously choose a positive rather than negative freedom in Europe. A positive freedom in the European Union would enable Lithuania to maintain its political and cultural identity, and would grant it a weighty role in the region, the European Union and the world. In its own turn, in the social and economic areas a Christian meta-politics would strengthen societal integrity, solidarity, personal and communal responsibility, and would enhance humanity—an action in short supply in Lithuanian policy.

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Introduction

With the Lithuanian presidency of the European Union having come to an end and a decade of its membership at hand, it is desirable to assess these developments. Whether, for instance, having achieved the most important strategic goals in 2004, we have maintained our capability to consider European policy strategically? What could be our strategic meta-political goals for the coming decade?

Since the accession to the European Union, both the studies on Europe and the policy of Europe in Lithuania have been focused on technocratic aspects of the Lithuanian membership in the European Union. The sense of Lithuania's presence in the European Union, its goal, further mission, program principles, which could comprise the entire sector, technocratic analysis and policy, have been beyond the boundaries of this analysis and the corresponding Lithuania's European policy. Technocratic studies on Europe have given rise to hundreds of sector profiles, recipes, priorities and strategies frequently intra-contradictory, lacking cohesion and common program-related direction.

In Lithuania, different values-based aspects of foreign policy have been analyzed (e.g. collections compiled by the Institute of Democratic Politics: e. g. "Deterioration of Values: a Serious Attitude towards Responsibility";¹ "Ideas, Values, Personalities for the Future of Lithuania";² works by Alvydas Jokubaitis "Why Value Thinking Kills Politics?";³ "Politics Devoid of Values";⁴ etc.⁵); however, in these studies, the authors do not associate their values-related thinking with Lithuania's European policy and certainly not with the meta-political principles of the Holy See. The originality and relevance of this study is the introduction of the meta-political level into the analysis of our "post-accession" presence in the European Union. In the present situation, this would help in searching for a bigger strategy for our state. The current fragmented operation in the European Union will not be and cannot be effective until it is consolidated into one cohesive strategic vision, and until our limited resources are not properly concentrated at the strategic level.

The main objective of this article is to assess Lithuania's European policy of this decade from the point of view of a values-related profile, and to enrich it with a meta-political dimension. Seeking the best alternatives for the horizontal

¹ *Vertybių nykimas: rimtas požiūris į atsakomybę*, Vilnius: Demokratinės politikos institutas, 2008

² *Idėjos, vertybės, asmenybės: Lietuvos ateičiai*, Vilnius, Demokratinės politikos institutas, 2011

³ Jokubaitis A., *Kodėl mąstymas vertybėmis žudo politiką*, VU TSPMI metinėje konferencijoje 2010 m. lapkritį skaitytas pranešimas http://utabby.com/v?i=az1c5Zp_e38.

⁴ Jokubaitis, A., "Politika be vertybių", *Politologija*, 2008/1

⁵ Jokubaitis A., *Postmodernizmas ir konservatizmas*, Vilnius: Tarptautinių santykių ir politikos mokslų institutas, 1997.

and fragmented level of Lithuania's studies on Europe, the researcher has consciously chosen the European policy of the Holy See which stands out based on its vertical capability to maintain the continuity of its principles and essential goals and its impact on the formation of Europe itself. It is an attempt to find the most general attitude inherent in the European Union perspective which, in my opinion, is void in current discussions on European policy in Lithuania.

The key problem of the research provided in this article is the indefiniteness of Lithuania's European meta-politics as well as the values-based orientation of the entire Lithuanian foreign policy. Several years after Lithuania's accession to the European Union, it was famous for its "values-based" policy, but its values-related content was unclear both to the critics of Lithuania's European policy and to the executive personnel themselves. At present, the "pragmatic" European policy (that has emerged as a consistent outcome of the European secularization), dominant in both Lithuania and the European Union, is pushing Lithuania (as well as the European Union) to the margins of the global politics, and is turning both Lithuania and the European Union from an independent subject into a political object of other geopolitical structures or states more clearly and more exactly perceiving their meta-politics. The further integration of Lithuania within the European Union that has already been declared for a decade is, in essence, the execution of the previous pre-accession program and continues to be perceived as a technocratic functionalistic goal; however, Lithuania has not so far formulated a strategic vision of its membership in the European Union.

In this article, meta-politics is perceived as fundamental provisions of the implementation of common good and actions of strategic nature based upon them. According to the social doctrine of the Catholic Church, several essential values – human dignity, common good, subsidiarity, solidarity – belong to the area of meta-politics on which all the other values, man-made laws and standpoints rest. Meta-politics is politics that focuses on the question "why" instead of "how", on the essence of the existence, Logos, Christ, and not on partial, individual, "pragmatic" interests. A Christian is an integral person, a spiritual being, endowed with moral wisdom and capable of acting in a meta-political way because in this case the intellect, faith, feelings and will get united. This does not mean that a practicing Christian can solve all global problems; however, this indicates that each practicing Christian can make decisions, taking into consideration the whole of man and of the world, i.e. each Christian politician can function in a meta-political way⁶.

⁶ For more information on European Christian meta-politics see: Pavilionis Ž., "Jono Pauliaus II ir Benedikto XVI požiūris į Europos Sąjungą", *Politologija*, 2010/3.

1. The First Decade of Membership – the End of the “Catch-Up” Program

Until the very accession to the European Union, Lithuania’s European policy was focused on the adopting and implementation of the acquis. The existential goal of the state was very clear, and no sense- or goal-related questions arose – the accession and attempts to “catch up” with other member states of the European Union became the focus. Joining the euro zone, being executed at present, integration in European Union’s transport and energy networks, even the presidency of the European Union are a part of the same “catch-up” program. However, with the “catch-up” program coming to an end, the question of what is coming next is getting more and more disturbing. What goals are we going to set when the whole technocratic “catch-up” agenda is implemented and our long-term European inferiority complex is completely satisfied? Is the elimination of differences in all cases and reckless integration a value per se? Why and how could Lithuania survive in the European Union maintaining its identity, dignity, tradition and the future of the nation? How could we consolidate our nation for exceptional, authentic mission—one truly our own— in the European Union? With the “catch-up” agenda coming to an end, the absurdity of this agenda is gradually becoming apparent since the “catch-up” has been posed as a goal in itself. Having joined the European Union, having successfully implemented all parts of the “how” program, the question “why” is becoming ever more puzzling, and the goals of the membership and the sense of “catch-up” and further presence in the European Union are becoming more and more urgent.

1.1. The Impact of the European Union on the External and Internal Policies of Lithuania after the Loss of Christian Meta-Politics

The European Union, having formally renounced Christianity as a moral meta-political vector in the Lisbon Treaty, is itself slowly losing its internal motivation to move in a single direction – the loss of the capability to perceive the European Union itself strategically, to see it from the point of view of meta-politics leads in the long run to disintegration; individual interests of countries, institutions, persons, political or economic groups are put into the foreground. In post-Christian Europe nobody can give guarantees that Lithu-

ania's essential, vital interests will be preserved. In the absence of ontological reality, destructive, centrifugal consumption-driven forces start functioning and eventually lead to the risk of losing the very humanity of the human being and the Europeanism of Europe. The meta-political reality, eliminated from the European Union in the Lisbon Treaty, is like a huge iceberg the withdrawal of which triggers an emergence from the depths of the sea of the old, pagan hyper-nationalism, resting on the popularized philosophy of Nietzsche, because of which, in its own turn, more than a single war broke out and such states as Lithuania would usually lose their statehood.

The incapability of the European Union to execute a consistent foreign policy, insufficient support to the neighbors of the European Union, the “weariness” of the European Union development policy, constant and ever deepening internal crises are attributes of the European Union devoid of meta-politics. In terms of values, the post-Christian Europe is becoming ambivalent, open to any existing-around ideologies or more aggressively foisted policies and this may again be taken advantage of by seeking aggressive aims third states that are not interested in the existence of the European Union. The loss of a Christian meta-political dimension is eventually leading the European Union to global geopolitical defeat – because of the lack of both demographic tendencies and internal and external strategic meta-politics. In its turn, the European Union with Christian meta-politics could become one of the most important instruments of Christianity in seeking universal common good in the world; it could be an active global actor that exists not only aiming at the infinite perfection of its own functionality but also in order to achieve higher universal goals. This type of the European Union could not accommodate with global or regional dominance of major authoritarian powers since the current influence of these states is directly threatening the most important Christian aspirations – human dignity and common good. Respectively, the enlargement process of the European Union would speed up, the external policy would become more active, and internal integration processes would become more profound as well. Such an ambitious and strategic role of the European Union would correspond to the interests of Lithuania, and would grant Lithuania an adequate balance in its relations with Eastern neighbors.

At the beginning of the establishment of the European Communities, Christianity served as a unified meta-political reference system for unity – common meta-political principles created a possibility for European Union countries to communicate “on the same wave”. Human dignity, solidarity, subsidiarity, the rule of law, equality, justice, and other Christian values constitu-

ted a unified cultural reference system on which everyday political practice rested. The loss of these principles (or their foundation, i.e. Christianity) is destroying this common reference system, and increasing misunderstanding and tensions in the European Union. In the de-Christianized European Union where moral relativism has been given prominence, a way is gradually being opened for nihilism, devaluation of human dignity, and the radicalization of society.

At present, Lithuania is, in principle, passively taking advantage of the negative freedom in the framework of the European Union; Isaiah Berlin states that “negative” freedom is a freedom that seeks to better protect an individual from coercion and decrease the interference of other people in private space⁷; however, in using this freedom, definite objectives are not sought, since these objectives would be perceived as unnecessary coercion or interference in individual or relativist private space. Both in Lithuania and in Europe, politics is slowly losing its content. Politics is more and more used to satisfy short-term individual interests, related to the thirst for power, personal career or easy money.

A modern, tolerant and politically correct European today feels guilty for his own existence in the world and seeks to deconstruct his ontological identity, to give his body and soul to some “other” who remains undefined as well⁸. A European or Lithuanian neo-liberal, a herald of multi-culture, in seeking to abolish discrimination, starts victimizing his own identity, and begins to consider his own “intolerant” Christian culture as the source of all societal misfortunes, thus suicide-like opening ways for other cultures, religions, ideologies which naturally change the foundations of the existence of the human being and society, of the functioning of the state or the entire European Union. Having unconsciously chosen negative freedom within the European Union, Lithuania is doomed to the dissolution or dispersion of its people in Europe since as a state it does not have a meta-political vision, which could consolidate it in the post-modernist European Union sea of endless technical and consumerist choices, the sea where atomized and emigration-oriented Lithuanian citizens, having or wishing to have nothing in common with Lithuania as a meta-political vision, have successfully so far been swimming in.

In the neo-liberal European Union, Lithuania devoid of Christian meta-politics should essentially renounce not only its Catholicism but also its patriotic tradition as well because this is becoming a “remnant of the past” in the

⁷ McClay, Wilfred M., *Liberalism after Liberalism*, First things, May 2012, p.26

⁸ Degutis, Algirdas, *Atviros visuomenės spąstai*, <http://www.patriotai.lt/straipsnis/2010-03-08/atviros-visuomenes-spastai> reprinted from: ATHENA, 2008 Nr. 4, ISSN 1822-5047

boundless sea of “other” identities or interests – since Lithuanian patriotism with its limiting, stronghold Catholic identity is becoming a spontaneous discrimination of “different” neighbors or minorities residing in Lithuania. For a neo-liberal, respect for human dignity, the traditional family, political or religious associations, respect for the state (or sovereignty of the state) are only one of available equivalent choices which, in the long run, become of their own accord “inconvenient” due to the necessity to make sacrifices or sacrifice a part of one’s comfortable consumerist existence. Negative freedom is freedom against any commitment, freedom for an endless emancipation which in principle has no limits; however, at the same time, this freedom turns into an abstract revolt against everything, including one’s own self or one’s state.

By completely and pragmatically “opening” itself to Europe Lithuania as an identity remains no more. In this case, Europe itself in the long run will stop existing. Lithuania without Christian meta-politics gives in and gets adjusted to individual, egotistical interests of separate European Union actors – thus, an accommodative or “pragmatic” policy for Lithuania is an excuse not to essentially fight for strategic meta-political interests of Lithuania itself in the European Union, and to limit itself to partial short-term interests that would result in only short-lived political, economic or public relations-oriented effect.

1.2. The Loss of Lithuania’s European Policy Strategic Capabilities

Lithuanian elite are unable to maintain strategic attention towards European policy. The first attempts to critically reflect on Lithuania’s European policy after the accession to the European Union were made by the Strategic Studies Center which prepared a study on Lithuania’s European Union policy, in 2007–2008 conducted a strategic monitoring of Lithuania’s European policy. The Center for European Integration Studies tried to execute a similar mission; however, in both cases, this noble goal was not achieved. At present, neither these nor other centers engage in similar activity and if they do, research is conducted in narrow sectorized areas. For the ruling elite that are concentrated on technocratic advantages of the membership, such comprehensive strategic analysis was not necessary. Though in 2008 strategic guidelines of Lithuania’s European Union policy for the period of 2008–2013 were approved and in 2008 as well as in 2012 the same was done to Government programs containing several paragraphs on Lithuania’s European policy, the approved European policy attitudes were not given strategic attention. It is symbolic that this year, the

validity of the mentioned strategic directions expires. During the preparation for the presidency and the presidency itself, the greatest attention was focused on logistics, smooth organization of sittings, general presentation of Lithuania and much less to the strategic content of the presidency or the more so to future long-term strategy which would as well cover the period after the presidency in seeking in the future to most effectively use the accumulated during the presidency experience for the benefit of Lithuania itself. European policy in Lithuania is essentially being executed only at the technical–bureaucratic level. There is simply no regular strategic political discussion on long-term European activity directions or implementation of corresponding goals. So far, there is not any format in which top Lithuanian politicians could regularly contribute to the formation of such politics or meta-politics. Since 2008–2009, when political functionaries, usually having neither long-term European integration experience nor long-lasting perspective on the strategic activity in Europe began to be assigned to the highest posts in ministries, the field of European policy vision has considerably narrowed. Lithuania's current European policy is essentially based on the personal erudition and unquestionable capabilities of President of Lithuania to operate in European Union structures; however, the insufficient strategic involvement of other Lithuanian departments in Lithuania's European policy is obvious proof that Lithuania has so far been unable to structurally consolidate all the available resources and direct them so as to increase its impact on Europe.

The shortcoming of the strategic management is still a trouble concerning not only the control of European matters but also of all the other matters in Lithuania – hitherto strategies (including the latest “Lithuania 2030”) have been developed in a politicized, sectorized way, most frequently without involving either political opponents (without seeking a national accord on strategic guidelines) or academic humanitarian or social institutions (without conducting regular scientific research), lacking a clear strategic management concept of Lithuania's progress, without conducting a continual analysis of the Lithuanian strategic situation. The number of separate sectorized strategies in Lithuania is relentlessly increasing; they are not united into one totality and often contradict each other. The fact that Lithuania's European policy is not regularly analyzed at the strategic level as if confirms the statement that Lithuania's European policy is essentially devoted to technocratic, sectorial accommodation.

In Lithuania there was established a universal split-mindedness typical of the secularized world of the West, fragmented and having no internal integrity mentality, due to which the concept of the integral human life does not

simply find a place for itself – at work one type of rules is in force, at home or during the weekends there is some time left for “personal” life; however, even in this area, spiritual and moral things have become pure emotions, have lost their ontological foundations – neither place nor time nor desire for the integrity of human life, human dignity, capability to see the totality are left. Politics simply turns into the art of negotiation, i.e. “puzzles” devoid of a major strategic or meta-political content though painted in bright colors of individual atomized interests. Lithuania’s pragmatic European Union policy often conceals the absence of a strategic vision, misperception of its mission, and adjustment to everyday conjuncture.

2. The Principles of Lithuania’s European Meta-Politics for the Second Decade of Membership

What could Lithuania’s European meta-politics look like in the coming decade? What meta-political principles would guarantee the long-lasting existence of the state as well as the implementation of its strategic interests, meanwhile consolidating the internal and external potential of Lithuania as effectively as possible? What meta-political principles would best correspond to its national vocation in the context of the universal Christian meta-political tradition?

2.1. Ecumenism – one of the most important principles of Lithuanian meta-politics

Both from the point of view of history and geopolitics the role of Lithuania is unique since Lithuania (particularly its capital) is founded quite near the historical, cultural and religious breaking point – Vilnius as well as entire Lithuania is uniquely suitable to continue its ecumenical mission. In his writings, the Venerable John Paul II underlines a particular meta-political role of the Old Vilnius where a variety of nations and religions co-existed in harmony. The Pope points out that Vilnius is particularly close to him as it was the Lithuanians that granted Poland the “Jagiellonian” identity the key attributes of which are “multi-facetedness and pluralism but not self-limitation and withdrawal”⁹. The “Jagiellonian” identity is the Christian identity of Lithuania yet Vytautas the Great has so far been much more appreciated than, for

⁹For more information see: Jonas Paulius II, *Atmintis ir tapatybė*, UAB „Katalikų pasaulio leidiniai“, 2005

example, St. Kazimieras – until now a Lithuanian has not been comfortable reflecting on his own truly Christian and European identity. In order to restore the role of Lithuania in the region and Christian Europe, Lithuania has to reconstruct the old Christian, “Jagiellonian” identity of Lithuania. The Christian Lithuanian identity would grant Lithuania the meta-political depth, associate its patriotic identity with the Christian tradition of Europe, harmonize its relations with neighboring Christian countries, the historical Jewish community, balance its relations with neighbors, slow down the role of the authoritarian Russia in the region—that is what Jogaila’s dynasty was aware of more than half a thousand years ago. Lithuania (alongside the neighboring Poland) would assume a culturally and geopolitically significant Christian stronghold role which would be recognized not only by the traditional Lithuanian society but also by multi-million strong Catholic nation that constitutes the strongest religious community both in the European Union and the USA and the world. It was such a mission that was embodied by Jogaila and the Jagiellonians who “deserved unquestionable glory as fierce faith defenders”¹⁰. The Jagiellonians attempted to join all European Christian missions of those days and sought to present themselves as those among the most important defenders from the Tartars and Turks (Jogaila’s son Wladyslaw fell in Varna battle with Turks in 1444); thus, in Jogaila’s times, Lithuania took over the Christian rampart meta-politics which had been first formulated by Hungary and later by Poland and Lithuania as well¹¹. Lithuania achieved a similar recognition and influence alongside Poland in modern times as well – for a short period until the demise of the late President of Poland Lech Kaczyński in Smolensk.

Ecumenism is not easily achievable for a contemporary Lithuanian since he cannot fill it with content because he refuses to accept its ontological content – he cannot find harmony among different religions of the world, as he is not familiar with the religious content of either his own or “other” religion. The only motif and decision criterion is his personality and individual interest; therefore, in the post-modernist de-Christianized European Union, the integration is executed only in the areas where it is still feasible – at the technological, economic, political institutional level – “on the surface” which does not extend to the internal spiritual, cultural depths of European Union citizens. Respectively, European Union *acquis* has been covering the “human” dimension (including education, culture, social matters, health care) in a very

¹⁰ Rowel S.C., “Lietuva – krikščionybės pylimas?: vienos XV amžiaus ideologijos pasisavinimas”, in Staliūnas, D., sud., *Europos idėja Lietuvoje: istorija ir dabartis*, Vilnius: LII leidykla, 2002, p.31.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p.32

limited way until now. The digression of a neo-liberal to the pole contradictory to ecumenism – secular nationalism or religious fundamentalism – is also very popular. In this case, the image of the individual and the world is simplified and creates an artificial, temporary sense of security, appeals to the lowest human instincts, becomes one of the answers of neo-liberal societies to the clash with more archaic identities and everyday senselessness. Society is getting ever more disintegrated, alienated and radicalized.

Meanwhile, before the Enlightenment epoch, the meta-political ecumenical tradition was very important in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Since the very beginning of its establishment, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was multinational and, in essence, ecumenical. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Lithuanian-Polish State was a true oasis of religious tolerance; in England, the Netherlands, France, Switzerland heads were rolling and fires were blazing, whereas in the Lithuanian-Polish State different radical and elsewhere un-tolerated religious groups would find refuge and a unique peaceful religious coexistence prevailed.¹² Religious tolerance was established by law in 1593, by the order of Sigismund Augustus on equalization Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant rights; freedom of faith were also established in the Third Lithuanian Statute (1588)¹³. The USA established a similar freedom of faith in its Constitution only at the end of the 18th century. Such religious tolerance and its historical significance for the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania eventually opened the way to Union of Brest which until present time is considered by the Catholic Church as a model of possible unification with the Orthodox Church. Gradual withdrawal from the ecumenical tradition (e.g. in 1673, non-Catholics were banned from knighthood), growing religious and national tensions between Orthodox, New Uniates and Catholics (especially Polish Catholics and Ukrainian Orthodox) eventually lead to geopolitical catastrophe of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It was not without reason that in the Russian lands taken from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Catherine II immediately completely abolished the *ecclesiastical* Union of Brest; thus, the Church was deprived of about 4,800 Uniate parishes and even 8 million members¹⁴ (for comparison: at that time the USA independence was proclaimed by 3 million Americans living in British colonies). For geopolitical reasons, Russia tried to consistently destroy this ecumenical spirit in Lithuania in the 20th century and at the present time. Presumably due to

¹² Ališauskas V., sud., *Krikščionybės Lietuvoje istorija*, Vilnius: Aidai, 2006, p. 253.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p.254.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p.333.

that, as early as in the interwar period Russia was on good terms with the Nationalist regime in Lithuania which, in essence, successfully contributed to the implementation of Russia's secularization policy, since it was not religious but secular national identity that constituted the foundation of the state cherished by the Nationalists. In the interwar period, Russia successfully identified Catholicism with Polonism¹⁵ and related Lithuanian nationalism either to Russia, Orthodoxy or to the pre-Christian Lithuania of "Dukes". Similarly, the Soviet authorities encouraged interest in the old Lithuanian culture; it was in Soviet Lithuania that the first works about pre-Christian Baltic faith and mythology were published, and the Lithuanian pagan culture was aggrandized as an alternative to the Christian culture which, according to the Soviets, "destroyed the high pagan" culture. At present, Russia is actively continuing its traditional policy of the incitement of disagreements between Lithuania and Poland which is supported by radical national forces from both sides.

Lithuania's membership in the European Union and NATO, and the processes of the integration of Eastern neighbors into the transatlantic family should provide favorable geopolitical conditions for the revival of ecumenical ambitions of Lithuania. The ultimate unification of (Christian) Europe (not only from the geographical, legal, economic but also meta-political point of view) – the aim sought by both the founding fathers of the European Union and the Holy See, and the old Jagiellonians, could eventually become a long-term strategic goal of Lithuania. However in this case, Lithuania itself should pursue meta-political foreign policy in the East – not only strive to implement narrow sectorial business or geopolitical interests, but also assess its relations with Eastern neighbors through the entire prism of the meta-political spectrum, ranging from respect for human dignity to the deep transformation of society, cultural and social integration, and see its everyday relations with Eastern neighbors in the long-term perspective of Christian meta-politics and unification.

Christianity is a religion that is essentially directed towards overcoming borders. Based on the inherent meta-political ecumenism through which John Paul II managed to resurrect the Church and the entire Western World, Lithuania has many possibilities and opportunities to make a weighty contribution to the further unification of Christian Europe. Until the fall of Constantinople in the 15th century, Western Christians were trying to extend the influence of

¹⁵Unfortunately, at the beginning of the 20th century, this attitude was also popularized by Polish priests who tried not to acknowledge the right of both Lithuanians and Belarusians and Ukrainians to the faith in their own language.

Western Christianity towards the East, later (after Columbus's discoveries) directing all their energy in the direction of the West. However, in essence, it was only after the end of the Cold War that Western Christian states turned their eyes to the East again, thus giving Lithuania all possibilities to return to its Christian meta-political ecumenical mission¹⁶. As noted by Gintaras Beresnevičius, “despite inner tolerance, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania historically still represented itself as a forward post of Western Christianity; along the entire frontline, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, from the upper reaches of the Volga River to the Crimea, in the territory of present-day Belarus, Ukraine and part of Russia, it held on against steppe hordes that in the 13th – 15th centuries were amassed into the Golden Horde, and China”¹⁷. Having used its century-old experience in ecumenical policy, today Lithuania could play an important role in shaping transatlantic meta-politics in the East. Lithuania's capabilities to consolidate the whole transatlantic family before the EU Eastern Partnership Summit on 28-29 November in Vilnius shows Lithuania's potential towards the East; however, the ultimate success within this context will depend on the ability to strategically pool and direct resources not only to occasional meetings or chairings, but also to a long-term perspective with a clear meta-political vision and harmonizing tactical everyday actions.

2.2. Human dignity – an unperceived principle of Lithuanian meta-politics

The poverty of Lithuania's European policy becomes apparent when analyzing one of the key principles of Christian meta-politics – the understanding and realization of human dignity in Lithuania. The Catholic Church clearly relates human rights to theological anthropology and transcendental human dignity. The modern neo-liberal tradition, in its turn, is devoid of a positive human vision, its essence being a deconstructed human ontological identity. A human being without the ontological dimension loses his/her uniqueness, vanishes in the anonymity of the collective, institution, structure or system. The ontological constituent of the human being in Lithuania has experienced many challenges – after different experiments of the totalitarian system, the concept

¹⁶ In this context, rather symbolic seems to be the decision of the biggest USA secular Catholic organization *Knights of Columbus* announced in August 2013 about extending its activities to Lithuania and Ukraine

¹⁷ Beresnevičius G., „Jei didieji kunigaikščiai būtų turėję kalašnikovus“, žr.: Savukynas P., sud., *Šiek tiek iš šalies: esė apie Lietuvą ir Europą*, Inter Nos, 2002, p. 15.

of the human being in Lithuania has not yet regained its ontological content and integrity. Like the majority of post-Communist countries (with the exception of Ukraine and Poland), Lithuania does not have any national regulations in its Constitution underlying the transcendental origin of human dignity. Human dignity is not mentioned in either the Strategic Guidelines of Lithuania's European Union policy for 2008-2013 or the Government's program for 2008-2013, or "Lithuania's progress strategy "Lithuania 2030"¹⁸. In the Government's program for 2012-2016, human dignity is mentioned, though a closer look at individual provisions of this program (e.g. family policy), it becomes evident that part of its provisions contradict the concept of Christian human dignity.

In his farewell address on 8 September 1993, John Paul II noted that Lithuania knows very well what it means to manage human life without God; nevertheless, even twenty years after the Pope's visit, the majority of the Lithuanian elite still follow neo-liberal, secular attitudes formed during the times of Marxism and materialism. The Lithuanian Christian Democrats Party (like during the interwar period) did not manage to establish itself (most probably, because of active action from the third party, too), and part of the Lithuanian Conservatives took over secular empiric British Conservatism, while the other part – liberal or even libertar narrative¹⁹, thus dissociating itself from a more metaphysical tradition of the continental Christian Democrats, which is represented in the party by the minority symphathetic to Vytautas Landsbergis. However, as Alvydas Jokubaitis notes, "had the Conservatives even for a while forgot about the first – ontological – level of their political philosophy when defending their certain short-term political principles, they would immediately face the same ideologization threats, the impact of which liberalism and socialism experienced"²⁰. According to Jokubaitis, all Lithuanian parties ground their political action on abstract political principles, certain political recountings and narratives²¹, proving their righteousness without direct interface with ontological reality. From the Christian point of view, human dignity was first referred to at the state level only on March 12, 2010, when the Inter-Parliamentary Group for Human Dignity was established in the Seimas and was headed by the then Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė. In her 2010 and 2011 annual reports, Lithuania's President also spoke about the need to concentrate state politics upon the principle of unconditional human preemi-

¹⁸ Lietuvos pažangos strategija „Lietuva 2030“, <http://www.lietuva2030.lt/images/stories/2030.pdf>

¹⁹ Jokubaitis A., „Konservatizmo fenomenas“, žr.: *Libertas & pietas: lietuviškas konservatizmas, antologija 1993-2010*, Demokratinės politikos institutas, Vilnius, 2010, p. 106.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p.117

²¹ *Ibidem*, p.106

nence. In 2013, Vytautas Landsbergis also announced a new movement for the restoration of humanity in Lithuanian politics.

There have been no coordinated consecutive state or governmental actions related to the issues of human dignity throughout the entire period of independence. A technocratic, “the physicists”, attitude towards the human being is further prevailing in Lithuania. A tradition of human disrespect for human dignity has formed, which, in essence, the Lithuanian elite tried to unsuccessfully deal with as early as in the interwar period. In Lithuanian politics, the human being is perceived not only as an objective per se, but as a means—an instrument for implementing one or another partial interest of the authorities. Paul Goble²², the first official of the USA State Department on the Baltic States, who has been studying the Baltic States for several decades and directly contributed to the case of the Baltic independence, claimed that currently the Baltic States are experiencing their most difficult period. Representatives of the present day elite of the Baltic States are, in fact, “anti-Soviet Bolsheviks” essentially grounding their political views on the attitudes formed during the time of Soviet occupation, who resist the establishment of a new European generation.

The deterioration of human dignity in Lithuanian politics contributed to the disappointment of Lithuanian citizens in parliamentary democracy, distrust in parties, law and order, authorities, as well as to the growth of radicalism and populism, which naturally increased tensions with minorities, neighboring countries, weakened Lithuanian foreign policy, its ecumenical dimension, and also added to the growing emigration. Meanwhile, during his visit to Lithuania, John Paul II pointed out that one of the most difficult tasks and challenges in Lithuania will be to overcome the tendency of alienation, indifference, misunderstanding, and secularism; therefore, according to the Pope, one of the most significant goals of Lithuania should be “education of a new human being”²³. In the University of Vilnius John Paul II emphasized the particular role of the Lithuanian intelligentsia in helping Lithuania to avoid skepticism, “dangerous pragmatism”, to search for metaphysic truths and foster “the ethic of reasoning” that “looks not only for logical accuracy but also creates a spiritual climate for the mental activity”²⁴. Addressing the youth, the

²² A speech by Paul Goble, a special adviser to the US President on the Baltic States in 1990-1991, about twenty years of the independence of the Baltic States, which was delivered at Wisconsin Eau-Claire University in March 2011

²³ *Šventasis žmonių širdyse Jonas Paulius II Lietuva 1993*, the National Radio and Television of Lithuania, 2011, a speech of the Holy Father in Vilnius Archcathedral Basilica delivered to priests, monks, nuns and clerics (Vilnius, 4 September 1993)

²⁴ *Šventasis žmonių širdyse Jonas Paulius II Lietuva 1993*, the National Radio and Television of Lithuania, 2011, a speech of the Holy Father in Sts Johns Church of Vilnius University delivered to the intelligentsia (Vilnius, 5 September 1993)

Pope stated that particular responsibility awaited the Lithuanian youth of those days: “to build the future of your country starting not from the windows but from the foundations”, and one of the main tasks is “to educate versatile and strong personalities and convinced Christians”²⁵. A strong personality, human dignity, and civil awareness have not yet become the main concern of Lithuania during the twenty years of independence; however, in the USA, for example, it has been long realized that a strong state starts with a strong personality that stands on firm meta-political foundations, thus ensuring ontological preeminence of human dignity against the state.

After Lithuania’s accession to the European Union, not a single national institution having coordinated supervision of human rights in the country actually remained in Lithuania. The reform of education that could essentially enhance the constituent of human dignity in the country, has not so far been carried out mainly for economic reasons, but the essential objective of this reform has never been a higher level of humanistic education, civil awareness or patriotism²⁶. The reform of the justice system that should help defend human rights and personal dignity has not yet yielded the expected results – in courts and institutions supervising them, because of the Soviet legacy, human dignity is not a dominant value; corruption is still “the most painful, most deeply rooted and hardest to treat disability”²⁷. “The most human” areas (social policy, health care) still remain the least reformed since in neo-liberal society these sectors (like education, culture) are losing their significance; they are not prioritized. All previous governments of Lithuania were, in principle, neo-liberal (both left and right), and were focused mainly only on the economic part of their program, and any life-related issue was explored from the economic point of view, and the political elite itself was “economized”. Instrumentalist thinking is characteristic of the majority of Lithuanian parties and politicians – the moral structure of society for them is not a value per se but a tool for seeking economic prosperity or alleviation of social poverty²⁸.

²⁵ *Šventasis žmonių širdyse Jonas Paulius II Lietuva 1993*, the National Radio and Television of Lithuania, 2011, a speech of the Holy Father in Darius and Girėnas stadium in Kaunas delivered to the youth (Kaunas, 6 March 1993)

²⁶ The non-active role of the Catholic Church in this field is also noteworthy; whereas the USA Catholic Church, trying to regain its position in the Protestant-dominant country, paid full attention to Catholic education and founded a Catholic school in each parish

²⁷ 2011 m. Lietuvos Respublikos Prezidentės metinis pranešimas Seime, http://www.president.lt/lt/prezidento_veikla/metinis_pranesimas/2011_m..html.

²⁸ Adomėnas M., *Tikėjimas, politika, tapatybė: katalikybės ir konservatizmo santykių vingrybės Lietuvoje*“, žr.: *Libertas & pietas: lietuviškas konservatizmas, antologija 19932010*, Demokratinės politikos institutas, Vilnius, 2010, p. 362.

2.3. Communitarianism – a declared but unimplemented principle of Lithuanian meta-politics

Common good is the second most important principle of the Church's social doctrine alongside human dignity. It is in relation to another person and to the community that human dignity and integrity is revealed. "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" is the most important commandment of the Church. Other important meta-political principles, such as solidarity and subsidiarity, also arise from this commandment. Accordingly, so too arise respect for the family as the main community cell, local communities, and associations which make up the basis of civil society. The interaction of these principles will further be called communality.

During the twenty years of independence, only the external normative structure of democracy has been built in Lithuania; democracy is still an elite project in which Lithuania's citizens, their associations, communities are not involved actively enough, the inner quality of democracy has not yet become a matter of concern. Society is atomized, relativistic, devoid of its meta-political landmarks. After the restoration of the country's freedom, civil society was not capable of moving to the stage of creative interaction – the authorities strengthened their position, the distance between political parties, the elite leading the state and civil society increased. Membership of both political parties and social organizations is still sparse or even diminishing²⁹. According to Dorota Pietrzyk-Reeves, a political scientist of *Jagellian University* in *Krakow*, like in many other post-Communist countries, democratic elitism has formed in Lithuania³⁰ - such model of democracy in which strong civil society, wide citizen participation, strong and independent communities are not necessary. It was not difficult to establish democratic institutions and introduce the model of the market economy, however, social and cultural changes were taking place very slowly – civil rights by themselves do not create active and responsible citizens or their communities.

Interwar Lithuania may serve as a good example. According to Šarūnas Liekis, Lithuanian society did not manage to resist the invader because drawbacks characteristic of the entire Smetona administration were dominant: "centralization, lack of initiative, a culture of indulgence that prevented from noticing drawbacks, distrust of fellow citizens <...> in Lithuania, there was no

²⁹ Jurkutė M., Šepetyš N., sud., *Demokratija Lietuvoje: pilietiškumas ir totalitarizmas XX amžiaus istorijos lūžiuose*, Vilnius: Naujasis Židinys-Aidai, 2011, p. 30.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p.51

independent media, independent trade and business unions, autonomous universities, political parties, independent interest groups³¹. In their turn, rebels and post-war partisans, who later set up resistance against the Soviets in 1941, were mostly related to the oppositional Catholic Church, the *ateitininkai*,³² the Catholic intelligentsia – those representing an organic, patriotic, Catholic civil community. The martyr community that was in a constant state of despair developed special spiritual strength in order to survive in, according to Timothy Snyder, dehumanized “bloodlands”³³. It was a deep meta-political relationship with the Catholic Church, which was the only independent historical communal institution that did not submit to invaders or regimes, and which enabled the creation of this resistance by the remaining Lithuanian civil community. These organic communal structures, “illogical humanity” centers always used to be the key targets of totalitarian and autocratic systems; as Czesław Miłosz writes, “what caused the greatest rage to the evil powers: certain customs, institutions, primarily different organic, as if existing by themselves, relations among people maintained by the family, faith, neighborhood, common heritage. In short, all disorderly illogical humanity...”³⁴. Even after the partisan resistance was broken down, Lithuania’s Catholic Church remained “the cornerstone of resistant identity”³⁵ throughout the entire period of the Soviet occupation.

Economic neo-liberalism, which became established after the restoration of the state, helped to do away with the communist totalitarian system, yet did not help to restore the remains of the destroyed human dignity, family, social environment, and, in many cases, was further destroying them. The crowd of the lonely, created by the Soviet regime when Lithuania’s natural society, traditional communities were physically and otherwise destroyed, found themselves in the whirlpool of liberal reforms and obtained freedom but not responsibility. This crowd felt even more lonely in spite of all positive effects of neo-liberal economic reforms. Prior to and after joining the European Union, reforms in Lithuania were directed towards the adaptation of the external infrastructure of Lithuania – physical, economic, legal, administrative – to the membership in the European Union, yet the internal, ontological, communal, social environment failed to be sufficiently revived. The dwindling financial

³¹ Liekis Š., „Lietuvos visuomenė ir kariuomenė 1939-1940 m.: pamokos likusiems Folkvange“, žr.: *Demokratija Lietuvoje: pilietiškumas ir totalitarizmas XX amžiaus istorijos lūžiuose*, 2011, p. 88-89.

³² Streikus A., „Lietuvos katalikų pilietinio aktyvumo pavyzdžiai ir ribos XX amžiuje“, žr.: *Demokratija Lietuvoje: pilietiškumas ir totalitarizmas XX amžiaus istorijos lūžiuose*, 2011, p. 144-145.

³³ Snyder, Timothy, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*, New York: Basic Books, 2010

³⁴ *Nerimas: svarbiausių humanitarinių ir socialinių grėsmių bei jų pasekmių Lietuvai įžvalgos*, Vilnius: Tyto alba, 2012, p.54

³⁵ *Demokratija Lietuvoje: pilietiškumas ir totalitarizmas XX amžiaus istorijos lūžiuose*, 2011, p.157.

support for education and culture, non-governmental, religious communities, universities, schools and teachers that are supposed to be primary civil awareness and communality sources inflicted a lasting damage to civil awareness, communality of Lithuanian society – fiscal punishment was introduced by drastic measures at the expense of the most vulnerable layers of society whose social benefits were considerably reduced, whereas the wealthiest layers suffered the least. A radical policy of economy crisis management with disregard to political and social consequences caused radical and populist political forces to take to the street, generated a new wave of emigration, created tension with minorities, and, respectively, with neighboring nations, as well. In fact, during the independence period local authorities had also been distancing themselves from people – instead of the former 582 municipalities in 1994, only 60 were left; municipalities in Lithuania are among the biggest in all Europe (the average population is 60,000, while the average population in municipalities of the majority of European states amounts to 15, 000). Abundant structural funds were not sufficiently used for further structural, social, educational reforms, national cultural objects; for different governments of Lithuania, the economic, quantitative rather than qualitative, human, aspect of the use of structural funds was the most important. In 2009, in a report of the European Union Family Policy Institute, Lithuania was named as one of the European Union countries that gives no priority to the family. In Lithuania, no efficient fiscal or other measures have so far been created that would encourage physical and juridical entities contribute to the needs of the community; in 2009, charity in Lithuania made up only 0.32 percent of the GDP³⁶, whereas voluntary charitable giving from private USA citizens amounts to even 10.2 per cent of the GDP. Funds allocated to the development cooperation during the economic crisis decreased almost threefold in absolute figures, although the European Union itself is the biggest support provider in the whole world and the Nordic countries are regarded as the second region in the world according to the scope of the provided developmental support. In terms of means allotted to fulfill defensive commitments, in 2012, Lithuania became the penultimate NATO state, which will not only naturally limit its capabilities to defend its community in the face of threat, but will also restrict its possibilities to contribute to international solidarity operations. It is to be hoped that Lithuania will not postpone a once missed opportunity to boost confidence in its economy, will treat it in a more responsible and more communal way, and introduce the euro. Efforts to

³⁶ World Giving Index 2013: A Global View of Giving Trends, December 2013 https://www.cafonline.org/PDF/WorldGivingIndex2013_1374AWEB.pdf

renounce insularity in the external trade policy, in the context of the migration policy are gradually becoming more apparent. Provided Lithuania managed to revive the traditions of meta-political communitarianism, this would, most likely, be one of Lithuania's most strategic and forward-thinking decisions, which would substantially contribute to the preservation of Lithuania's sovereignty for future generations.

Conclusions

Devoid of Christian meta-politics, Lithuania is losing its strategic cohesion, integrity, and strategic directionality of internal and external policies. Accommodative or "pragmatic" Lithuanian policy reflects Lithuania's incapability to fight for its own meta-political interests in the European Union and the region. Technocratic decisions within the framework of Lithuania's European policy are made regardless of meta-political principles; this poses a long-term threat to the sovereignty of Lithuania since internal centrifugal and external forces are starting to use Lithuania as an object or instrument of their policy, with Lithuania gradually losing its European policy subjectivity.

In its turn, Christian meta-politics would enhance the integrity of society, solidarity, personal and communal responsibility, and would help Lithuania preserve its political and cultural identity. It would strengthen the role of Lithuania in the region and the European Union. The meta-political principles would allow the perception of nationalism as vocation; that is, it would restore the relation between nationalism and Catholicism, to the destruction of which the occupation regime also consciously contributed. Lithuania's European meta-politics would restore ecumenism as a major tradition of old Lithuania, enabling it to maintain stability and concord over the vast state territory. Human dignity (an integral, patriotic, strong, spiritual personality) and communitarianism could, in this case, become one of the most important goals of Lithuania's European meta-politics. Return of human dignity and communality to the center of Lithuania's European policy would consolidate civil society, ensure more active involvement of Lithuanian citizens and communities in the development of contemporary (still elitist and normative) democracy, and would increase the State's immunity against various adverse actions.