

## Views regarding methodology of contemporary european studies

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### Abstract

*The article analyzes some very important questions of contemporary European Studies, such as actually situation, problems existing in this domain, the specific of European Studies methodology from the multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary points of views. A particular attention is paid towards the systematization, classification and analysis of the most important European Studies methods, inclusively generally, particularly and specific ones. Also, a special reference is made to the present necessities and perspectives of the future development of the European Studies methodology.*

*In this way, there are identified a range of problems that face European Studies methodology. Through them is underlined the weakness of European Studies methodology as it is a very young domain. Another problem is the controversy of the issue, because there are a lot of visions and opinions regarding the status of European Studies methodology. The existing problems in the domain of European Studies methodology can be explained by the fact that European Studies and especially some of its compartments as Political European Studies had developed their own methodologies recently. That is why, their methodology is not yet recognized by the all researchers in domain and thus it is not transferred to students and young researchers through methodology teaching.*

*At the question if European Studies methodology has its own methods it is clarified that as European Studies are a particular and specific domain, it surely has its scientific principles, methods and techniques. But these methods are at the incipient stage of their development. As result, a general theory of research methods in the domain should be elaborated.*

*In the domain of European Studies very important are multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary methods. So, in the case of the European Studies there can be determined several methodological levels of research and*

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*disciplinary interconnection. These levels are: monodisciplinarity, pluridisciplinarity, multidisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity. Each of these levels plays an important role in the research of European Studies.*

*Generally speaking, the research methods of European Studies are classified in the following categories: conceptual-philosophical methods, general-scientific methods, particular or regional methods and special research methods. In the article are presented the main features and explained the methods of each category, showing the practical aspects of their usage.*

*Talking about the prospects of European Studies development, there are traced some important thoughts. Through them there are mentioned first of all theoretical aspects of the European Studies. It is about the general theory of the European Studies that should have an important methodological function. The question is, if there is such a theory. We cannot state that it not exists, but also that it is. This kind of theory is going to be formulated.*

*Today, there are different theories in the field of European Studies theory, such as: European integration theories, EU governance theories and others. All of the European integration theories (federalism, functionalism, neo-functionalism and intergubernamentalism), theories of supranational governance, theories of new institutionalism, of rational choice, contemporary theoretical debates between constructivism, rationalism and reflectivism, various economic schools and theories of economic integration etc.- are particular theories of the European integration and none of them examines the European integration in its complexity. Thus, none of these theories can be considered as a general theory of European integration and unification. On one hand, maybe it is good that there are so many theories of European integration and unification among which are held debates. On another hand, this variety of theoretical visions not always contributes to the process of European construction. In this context, it is not surprising that have been appeared a range of new critical opinions that question the hypothesis that stood at the base of theories regarding the EU. In this way, it is interesting the vision of the Russian researcher, V.G.Shemeatencov, who argues that only in their entirety theories of European integration, could present us a complex image and explanation of the European integration phenomenon and all its aspects.*

*Hence, there can be traced the following points of what a European Studies theory with a strong methodological function should include: firstly, the basic concepts of the researched domain, of all European events including those of integration and unification; secondly, the most important theoretical notions; thirdly, basic theoretical principles that will permit the systematic organization of the European Studies general theory and will direct the process of European construction; and finally, the empirical explication and generalization of European facts and formulation of some prospects and recommendations on this base.*

*Thus, the most important objective for the development of contemporary methodology of European Studies is the formulation of the own research methods and techniques and development of the interdisciplinary, pluridisciplinary and*

*transdisciplinary methodologies that are the most representative for the European Studies domain.*

*Keywords:* European Studies, European Integration, Europe, European Studies Methodology, Methods, methodological levels, scientific research.

## **Introduction**

In the article are analyzed and discussed a range of problems of contemporary European Studies methodology that until present time are weak elaborated in the specialty literature. Firstly, is made a detailed evaluation of current situation and of problems and difficulties that exist in the domain of European Studies methodology. Then, is put into the discussion the problem of European Studies methodology distinctiveness from the monodisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity points of view. Further, the attention is focused on systematization, classification and detailed analysis of the main methods used within contemporary European Studies. The article ends with some conclusions regarding to necessities and future development prospects of contemporary European Studies.

## **European Studies Methodology: current situation and existing problems**

The main questions with which, in our opinion, we should start the discussions at this subject are as follows: 1. Have European Studies their own methodology, methods? 2. If yes, then, which are these methods and which is the respective methodology? Next, which methods are used at present time and could be used in contemporary European Studies?

But, before answer these fundamental questions, let us, firstly, see which is the situation, current condition of and what problems, difficulties are in the contemporary European Studies methodology.

Thus, we will begin with the *current condition and existing problems* of the European Studies methodology, with methods that are used in this domain. From the start, it should be mentioned that in the issue related to European Studies methodology we have a quiet precariously condition, this domain confronting with different problems. Through these problems, we draw attention on the following:

- Despite the fact of significant importance of the research instrument, a fact that is pointed out by many authors, the European Studies methodology is still weak elaborated. It can be stated that the methodology is at the incipient stage of its development. Until today, a little attention was paid to this domain. Moreover, not only in the European Studies domain, but in general, there is such a situation. Many authors underline that in the monodisciplinary field, in other words a field that refers to certain particular disciplines within European Studies, as for instance are research methodology of European

Union law[1] or methodology of research in political science, especially of Comparative Political European Studies[2, p.162-169], we can notice the same situation.

- Another problem is the quiet controversial and precariously condition regarding the elaboration of the proper European Studies methodology, a condition that is complicated because of the existing of a large number of opinions about the status, necessities and perspectives of methodological domain of respective studies.
- The condition and existing problems in the domain of European Studies methodology, in a great measure, are explained by the fact that European Studies, in general, and particularly some of its compartments, such as Political European Studies (as researchers concerned with this issue note), were the last disciplines that were equipped with an own methodological mechanism and this one is not deprived of strong appeals. As result, respective studies and sciences did not find the agreeable mean to create an own methodological mechanism that would be recognized by all specialists in the domain and transferred to students and young researchers through a coherent methodology teaching [2, p.164].

Thus, this is the situation. Now, in order to try to answer to the above formulated questions, an namely if European Studies have its own methodology and methods, and if yes, then which are these methods and methodology and respectively which methods are used in contemporary European Studies, first of all we should clarify the meaning that is attributed to the definitions of methodology and methods. According to the dictionaries, a method (from Greek – a mean, way, a mode of exposure) means a research manner, a system of rules or principles of knowledge and of objective reality transformation. [3, p.457].

Talking about the methodology, according to the same dictionaries (from Greek – methodos – way, mean and logos - science) is an entirety of methods used in a certain science, of which basis is formed by the system of the most general laws and principles of this science. [3, p. 457].

On the other hand, methodology means also the science about the application, practical use of knowledge/research methods in a certain domain. In accordance with Vasile Țapoc, methodology studies the methods and procedures used in science, and organizational principles of knowledge through their acceptance or rejection. A methodology, continues the author, consists of the following elements: 1. philosophical thesis; 2. normative principles that result from these thesis; 3. research strategies that include these principles; 4. evaluation or examination criteria of gained results [4, p.145]. Between methodology and methods, besides those mentioned, there is a relationship. Using a military language, Vasile Țapoc, speaks about the following relationship: if method determines the tactic (i.e. is of local importance), then, methodology imposes strategy (i.e. is theoretically general). On this base, the author makes the following important conclusion: methodology appears as a science or general theory of

knowledge methods, as a metamodel – a theory of used methods. [4, p.146].

At the question if the European Studies have their own methodology and own methods, after the brief presentation regarding the current condition of the methodology of these studies, we can give the following answer: European Studies, being a particular, specific, quiet necessary and important domain, from both theoretical and practical point of view, is impossible not have their own methodology, and respectively their own research methods, techniques, principles etc.

The problem consists in fact that as this domain is comparative recent, respectively the European Studies methodology is in a great measure in the incipient stage of advancement and is in the course of elaboration and development. A European Studies methodology, in the meaning described above by the Vasile Țapoc, i.e. a general theory of knowledge and research methods in this domain is going to be elaborated. European Studies, in their general, integrate and cumulated meaning, are still crystallizing their methodological status, seeking to determine which methods and research techniques should be undertaken from other research domains and recognize them as their own and which of them will be applied only in this domain. Starting from this point, we will try to identify which are the methods that are used in the European Studies domain. Before that we will determine what is the specific of European Studies, because without this, will be impossible to analyze the methodological set used in the domain.

### **The problem of European Studies methodology specific: multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity**

As there was analyzed in a previous work [20], European Studies are a specific domain not only from a conceptual point of view, linked to a certain concept of Europe, Europeanness, European culture, conscience and mentality, but as well from disciplinary, methodological, point of view. These subjects are going to be discussed below.

The problem, as well as the main question that appears when we discuss the European Studies methodology is that on one hand, the research object of European Studies is one kind, purposely Europe ( in general and in particular European Union, if we refer to contemporary Europe in its process of integration and unification). On another hand, however, there is not enough or sufficient only one discipline (as History of Europe or only European Economy, European policies etc.) to study this object, that is too complex, multidimensional and multisided. Hence, there are required more disciplines taken all apart and together. In other words, it is about multidisciplinary and pluridisciplinarity.

Taking into account those mentioned above, we can affirm that in the case of European Studies it is about monodisciplinarity when the accent is put on certain particular disciplines, separated, but it also is about the multi-, pluridisciplinarity, when the accent is put on the entirety of disciplines enclosed in an integrated

concept. Respectively, in methodological plan of application of certain methods, techniques, research procedures; it will be about both, used methods in a particular disciplinary domain and those methods that are used in different disciplines. That is why, in the European Studies domain very important and necessary will be the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary methods, especially those related to systemic and synthetic approaches.

Thus, in the case of European Studies we can and should talk about different methodological levels of research and disciplinary interconnection that form the framework of these studies. These research and disciplinary interconnection levels are:

*Monodisciplinarity*

*Pluridisciplinarity*

*Multidisciplinarity*

*Interdisciplinarity*

*Transdisciplinarity*

In respect that noted levels, especially those of pluridisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, are very important for understanding of the meaning and specific of European Studies methodology, it is necessary and interesting to discuss the way these concepts of methodological disciplinarity are interpreted.

In accordance with the levels presented above, we will start with the monodisciplinarity. Speaking about the monodisciplinarity it is quite clear the way of its application. It is the case of particular disciplines, each of them having their own specific methodological methods, techniques, procedures, rules and principles that are characteristic to the domain. If we talk about the disciplines from the disciplinary framework of European Studies, each of these, no matter whether is about History of Europe, European Economy etc., has its own established methods. Monodisciplinarity, basically, is strictly necessary, important and producing results in the research process. Moreover, it is, in some perspective, irreplaceable. However, as specialists underline, monodisciplinarity or disciplinary approach has some limits. It becomes insufficient, especially in some cases, particularly when is about the research of multisided and complex objects and phenomena. Disciplinary approach of a subject leads, in vision of Romanian author Aurel Jula from the Technical University of Engineering- Bucharest, to the drain of scientific creation, reducing it to the simple research technique, monotone and strictly specialized in one limited domain. Disciplinary approach (completed by Vasilescu Grigore) tends to create barriers between the groups of specialists, isolating them in scientific communities.[5] The conclusion can be the one: from methodological point of view, it is correct and welcomed that monodisciplinarity should be completed with other levels of disciplinarity.

Next, there will be presented other levels of disciplinarity that overlap monodisciplinarity. The notions of pluridisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity, as they are explained in the literature, are some kind of synonyms and refer to the study



and research not only from the point of view of one single discipline, but also from point of view of many disciplines at the same time. The subject analyzed through this multidisciplinary research will be a rich one. [5] This ascertainment is evident in the case of study of Europe, of European Union. If these are studied only at monodisciplinary level, from economic or political point of view, these studies will be poor and unilateral. In contrast, application of the multidisciplinary will allow researching of the subject, in our case the Europe (EU), multilaterally, from all points of view, economic, geographic, political, judicial, cultural and civilization one. The result will be an expected one: the research object, Europe (EU), will be richer, more complex, integrated etc.

Interdisciplinarity, at its turn, is very important in the European Studies too. As it is mentioned in the literature, interdisciplinarity has a different aim from that of the multidisciplinary. It supposes phenomena, concepts and general laws that are common to many disciplines which analyze in various contexts in order to highlight multiple sides and possibilities of their application in the domain of different disciplines.[5] Romanian author, G. Văideanu, in a publication edited since 1972, re-edited in 1985, shows that „interdisciplinarity implies a certain degree of integration among different domains of knowledge and different approaches, as well as application of a common language, admitting conceptual and methodological exchanges”[6] Another Romanian author, Basarab Nicolescu, sees the , interdisciplinarity as a transfer of methods from one discipline to another, having three grades of a such transfer: applicative, epistemological and generating of new disciplines.[7]

It is interesting and significant the parallel and linkage between the interdisciplinarity and Europeanness that is made by some authors. Though interdisciplinarity is a some kind of ideal for a researcher, talking about the difficulties of interdisciplinarity, the author from Romania, Mihaela Frunza, in a review of a work in domain [8], shows that these „are alike with difficulties of the political process of the European integration. This refers not only to the meaning that these two (interdisciplinarity and Europeanness or in the ultimate case the political process of European integration – completed by Vasilescu Grigore) are new experiments which receive support (only) rhetorical and a (very) real opposition and obstruction, but also in the meaning that disciplines “behave themselves” like nations implied in the process of European integration. Both have traditions, customs, methods and borders that are protected when are criticized or when are exposed to an external pressure.”[9] The author's conclusion is that interdisciplinarity as well as Europeanness should be understood especially as practices- rather open than closed, rather inclusive than exclusive.

Interdisciplinarity was classified from different points of view. In this way, there are interdisciplinarity of adjacent domains ( in which are applied methods and disciplines of other disciplines), interdisciplinarity of problems ( it is meant the problems that overcome the borders of some disciplines and the study requires the collaboration of more disciplines), interdisciplinarity of methods ( when methods

of one discipline is applied in another one), interdisciplinarity of concepts (when concepts from one discipline are applied in research in other discipline).

It should be mentioned that all highlighted types of interdisciplinarity are very important in the case of discussion of European Studies methodology. Starting from the postulate that methodology in general, methods that are applied and the whole methodological set should help us to find answers and solutions to the questions we are concerned with regarding the objectives, phenomena, processes and European problems, methodological interdisciplinarity comes to contribute in the mentioned meaning.

In this way, one of the bigger questions of methodological order, we can say, main trans-questions or even inter-questions, which will be interesting for us in the case of some integrated European Studies, would be for instance: in what manner the European history, economic development, European societies development, culture development etc. have gradually lead, all together and apart, to the appearance firstly of the idea of Europe (as a common space of peace, welfare and prosperity), of ideas of Europeanism, Europeanness, Europeanization, of ideas of European integration and unification, and then, later, of the necessity to realize in practice these ideas in the European construction?

This question in the case of European Studies becomes principal and it cannot be ignored in a manner, because within these studies we will not talk about the European history for the sake of history or about the European economy for the sake of economy etc. Our goal is not to educate within these studies historiographers or economists etc. The goal is to educate “Europeanists”!!! Respectively, all disciplines within the European Studies should be integrated, according to the methodological requirements of the interdisciplinarity, in the single one concept – that of Europe! Concepts of Europe, Europeanism, Europeanness, Europeanization as well as other concepts, respectively problems, are and should be common for all disciplinary domains of European Studies. Respectively, research methods of these phenomena and problems are and should be interdisciplinary.

Actually, in Romanian space, as Aurel Jula states in his work cited above [5], there are historic traditions regarding pluridisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity. One of the first Romanian researchers who approached in his works issues and subjects from all disciplinary prospects is considered to be Dimitrie Cantimir. In his famous works such as „Divanul sau gâlceava înțeleptului cu lumea” [The Divan or the scholar's quarrel with other people] wrote in 1698, „Istoria imperiului otoman” [The increase and decrease of the Ottoman Empire], wrote between 1714 and 1716 and especially „Descrierea Moldovei” [The description of Moldavia] wrote in 1716, as well as „Hronicul vechimii moldo-vlahilor” [The Chronicle of the Roman-Moldavian-Walachian people's old times] from 1717 and „Sistema religiei mahomedane” [The System Book, or the State of the Mohammedan Religion] from 1722, researched scientific problems are analyzed from geographic, historical, psychological, economic, linguistic, philosophical, religious, literary, and



artistically point of view. All of these are synthesized in a personal interdisciplinary manner of the author. Pluri- and interdisciplinary studies have also other authors from Romanian cultural space such as Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu, Dimitrie Gusti, Ștefan Milcu, Romulus Vulcănescu, H.H.Stahi and Mircea Eliade. There are respectable experiences and examples to follow in the case of studies of Europe too. As Dimitrie Cantimir had researched multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary phenomena as Moldova or Ottoman Empire, the same is necessary to do when a such complex phenomena as Europe is studied.

Finally, it is about transdisciplinarity, which is characteristic in a way to the European Studies domain research too. Transdisciplinarity, as Basarab Nicolescu noted and cited later by Aurel Jula, is among, alongside and above the disciplines and supposes the dynamic birth through various actions of reality levels. [5]. In other words, if pluridisciplinarity represents a more pronounced integration based more or less on symmetric communication between different explicative paradigms, transdisciplinarity regards an interconnection of many disciplines that lead to apparition of new disciplines or to other domains of knowledge and research. As a possible example of a such transdisciplinary approach could be the new discipline, respectively the „European Integration” course that is taught at the Faculty of International Relations, Political and Administrative Sciences of Moldova State University. This course is an examination on the base of interconnection of different disciplines, of knowledge, problems and methods of more disciplines, such as Europe History, European Economy, Political System, European Institutions and Policies, European Law, Philosophy of European Unification, European Cultures and Civilizations etc. Anyway, such a discipline could not appear if at it base there would not be a narrow monodisciplinary approach. Only an integrated, multisided, multidimensional examination, i.e. a certain multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and, especially, transdisciplinary examination offers the possibility to present in entirety the complex and complicate process of European integration.

### **Sistematization, clasification and analysis of main European Studies methods**

In general, methods that are applied in scientific research, including those regarding the research in European Studies domain, are classified, as it has been already established in methodological literature (we refer here to the author from Chisinau Vasile Țapoc who presents this classification in his well-known work „Teoria și metodologia științei contemporane: concepte și interpretări” [Theory and methodology of contemporary science: concepts and interpretations] ) [4, p.166], in the following groups or categories:

- General methods or general and logic methods (conceptual-philosophical methods);
- General-scientific methods;
- Particular or regional methods;

- Special research methods.

Hereinafter, briefly will be presented groups of methods presented above. (There will be enumerated and presented only the main and mostly used research methods). A more detailed description of respective methods can be finding in methodological works, inclusively in cited above work of the Vasile Țapoc)

General methods or general-logic presents the highest level of methodological generalization. This group, in fact one of the most important in science, builds conceptual basis, the philosophical base of scientific methodology for all sciences and respectively for sciences within European Studies as well. These methods, being elaborated, formulated and advanced through the centuries-old history of sciences development, are considered to be the most universal, i.e. of maximum generality and utility in their usage, named also as philosophical methods, are very important and include as follows: realist-empiric method (identified by Aristotle); dialectic method (advanced by Plato in antiquity, developed through the centuries by many thinkers, then elaborated in a systemic way by the famous German classic Hegel, continued in the contemporary period and considered to be one of the most important conceptual methods in the entire history of sciences!); inductive method (advanced by Francis Bacon at the beginning of modern period in science philosophy); deductive method (established by Rene Descartes in modern time); analytical method (initiated by John Locke, later developed by many philosophical and scientific schools and become one of the most used and widespread method in all contemporary sciences, especially in philosophy and science of XXIst century); phenomenological method (comes of Hegel philosophy and is promoted systematically by Edmund Husserl); hermeneutic method (elaborated and developed by Hans Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur); Structural-functional method (elaborated and established by many methodological researchers of the XXIst century science) etc.

Some authors classify the methods of maximum philosophical and scientific generality into four big groups: I – analytical methods (methods of natural sciences, of language science, mental philosophy); II- interpretative methods (hermeneutics, phenomenology, and dialectics); III – integrative methods (theoretical-systemic, constructive, deconstructive methods); IV- other methods of philosophical research.

General-scientific methods (some authors identify them as general-scientific principles) are also of extended generality and are applied in a large number of sciences, practically in all or in majority sciences. Among the most important and widespread methods of this group can be enumerated: historical method, mathematical-demonstration method, intuition, generalization, abstractization, modeling, ascension from the abstract to the concrete, formulation, axiomatization, observation, experiment, comparison, analogy, hypothesis etc.

At a lower level of methodological generality are placed particular (regional) methods, considered by some scholars as being special. Among these can be mentioned some famous methods as: content-analysis, event-analysis, quantitative

and qualitative analysis, other forms of analysis as factor analysis, correlation analysis etc., sociological methods of analysis etc.

The logic-systemic methodological set ends with the methods of the lowest level of generality- special methods, which are peculiar to certain sciences. These are the methods that are peculiar to each science and are related to its object of study.

The methods from all presented above groups are applied by all disciplines within the European Studies. Each of these methods are selected and combined in a proper manner, inclusively through inter-, multi-, pluri-, transdisciplinarity described above. However, there are special methods, peculiar to European Studies in entirety. Although these, as we had mentioned earlier, have not crystallized their own methodological framework yet, we can talk about some more special methods, applied in European Studies, especially taking into account that these methods are a part of a big political sciences domain, inclusively that of international relations, from conceptual and disciplinary point of view. In accordance of this, we will focus, hereafter, on some methods that are applied or can be applied in the European Studies domain, taking onto consideration their peculiarities:

- Firstly, it is about the political science methods, mostly about methods of political analysis, methods, techniques and procedures presented within the well-known Dictionary of Political Analysis [10]. These are the most applied research methods and techniques of the contemporary political science. In contemporary European Studies are applied or can be applied different methods, techniques, rules, procedures, approaches, concepts, theories etc., of general political science, as well as of international and comparative analysis, social analysis, behavior analysis, techniques of science and philosophy of science, statistic analysis, other methodologies and research techniques. (A selective bibliography regarding these research methods and techniques is presented in the above-mentioned dictionary [10, p.182-195]).
- For European Studies, as these are part of international relations science from conceptual point of view, an important significance has research methods and techniques with geo- character, respectively geo-methods: geopolitical methods, geo-economics methods, geo-strategical and geo-cultural methods etc.
- Among other methods and techniques applied by the European Studies can be mentioned the following: cross-cultural methods , practiced by contemporary European Studies; historical-linguistic methods and comparison methods, applied especially in text and political speech analysis, quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis and research, multicultural methods and methodologies, applied by contemporary European Studies especially regarding the spread of multiculturalism phenomena in European states. (As examples can be presented some works about Europe of such authors as Mircea Malița [11], Constantin Noica [12], C.W.Watson [13], in which are applied multicultural methods.); complex research methods and methodologies, inclusively and especially those systemic, structural,

structural-functional etc.; anthropological methods, applied in present in many European studies, producing good results: (here can be mentioned as examples of studies with anthropological methods as works of authors Emmanuel Todd [14], Elizabeth Pond [15], Antoine Compagnon and Jacques Seebacher [16]); communication methods with different quantitative and qualitative approaches, application of different types of factor analysis, correlation analysis etc.; contextual analysis method (content-analysis); also, different sociological methods with linear models (surveys, samplers, etc.), logic analysis, qualitative data analysis, case studies, interview techniques, question design, different measure-matrix approaches etc.

Hence, it can be argued that methodological set of contemporary science, inclusively of the sciences within the European Studies, is quiet various. However, methods are methods. There are no good or bad methods. Not always application of the most contemporary methods will automatically lead to good results. As, Vasile Țapoc wrote, with reference to Russian researcher Ivan Petrovici Pavlov, “with a successful method and with a less qualified researcher can be achieved extraordinary scientific results, while application of a wrong method, without inadequate knowing the subject, no scholar, no matter how qualified he or she is, will be not able to contribute with something valuable to science.” [4, p.165] All methods are good. In this context, Vasile Țapoc states:” the method is good if only normative principles are adequate to essential features of research subject and to necessary actions that should be undertaken in order to know these features in the process of research” [17, p.25]. So, everything depends on how we can apply and use methods during the research and not on proper methods. That is why, the same Vasile Țapoc insists on understanding/interpretation of methodology as a general theory on principles of methods' application in scientific research [4, p.5]

### **Necessities and development perspectives of contemporary European Studies methodology**

In present, although European Studies methodology has reached a certain level, there are necessities and some development perspectives of it. Among a plenty of problems that exist at this subject we will focus on several below.

First of all, we will start with a statement regarding theoretical aspects of the European Studies, which are very important, inclusively in methodological plan. It is about general theory of European Studies, a theory that has, should have an important methodological function. The question is if we have such a theory today. We cannot say we have not. But, we cannot, also, affirm that we have such a theory. A general theory of European Studies is going to be elaborated. The problem is that at the theoretical chapter of European Studies are elaborated a range of theories as so called European integration theories, more recently theories of European Union Governance and other theories (some of them are examined within the work

“Politics in the European Union” of Ian Bache and Stephen George. Especially it is about the first part of the work „Theory” [18, p.18-97]).

All existing theories of European integration ( as theories of federalism, functionalism, neo-functionalism and intergovernamentalism), theories of supranational governance, theories of new institutionalism, of rational choice and sociologic institutionalism, multilevel governance theories, contemporary theoretical debates between constructivism, rationalism and reflectivism, recent neo Marxist theories regarding European integration and European Union, various economic schools and theories of economic integration etc.- are particular theories of the European integration and none of them examines the European integration in its complexity, from all points of view and aspects. Thus, none of these theories can be considered as and cannot assume the role and function of a general theory of European integration and unification. On one hand, may be it is good that there are so many theories of European integration and unification among which are held debates. On another hand, this variety of theoretical visions not always direct and guide the practical process of European construction. That is why, recently, as the authors of mentioned above work “Politics in the European Union” state, “new critical perspectives that question the hypothesis that stood at the base of theories regarding the EU have been appeared” [18, p.19].

In this context, when there are more particular theories of European integration and none of them can have a high level of generalization and does not claim the role of a general theory, we agree with the Russian researcher, V.G.Shemeatencov, who, analyzing main European integration theories, inclusively from a methodological point of view, argues that only in their entirety, theories of European integration could present us a complex and adequate image and explanation of this unique European integration phenomenon and all its aspects. [19, p.351].

In our opinion, a general theory of European Studies with an important methodological function, in particular a general theory of European integration and unification too, that will guide and practice European Studies, should include:

- The basic concepts of the researched domain, here it is about the European events, including those of integration and unification. This is because, even if there are a lot of works about Europe, European integration and unification, there are some vagueness, especially regarding the European future, regarding what kind of Europe we want to build and how the tomorrow Europe, a unified Europe would look like etc.;
- Main theoretical notions, their definition and operationalization;
- Basic theoretical principles, which are as important as methodological functions, that will permit systematic organization of general theory of European Studies and, at the same time, will guide the practice of European construction. It is about different methodological principles. The most important among them, according to the theory and methodology of contemporary science are: immeasurability, correlation, elementariness,

- complementarity [4, p.148-160];
- As contemporary European Studies, as it was analyzed in one of previous works [20, p.8-9], tend to become and, in fact, are the research of problems characteristic to all contemporary Europe's states, in the period of integration and unification processes development, a major importance has the explication and generalization of empiric acts and phenomena and formulation on this basis of lawfulness of European integration processes, of forecasts and practical recommendations.

### **Conclusion:**

To conclude, the most important issue, in the context of necessities and perspectives of further contemporary European Studies methodology development, is the focusing on the elaboration of some own research methods and techniques, as in present, most frequently is applied a methodological set from other domains, other sciences etc. Of course, special efforts are necessary in methodologies development regarding interdisciplinarity, pluridisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, because these, as we saw, are the most representative and necessary for this multidisciplinary domain of European Studies. So, European Studies methodology should be developed in a proper way in order to analyze and explain the principles, procedures, phenomena and mechanisms of functioning and advancement of European integration, European Union and Europe in general.

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