

# Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations

Volume 12, no. 3 (20) / 2010

**N.S.P.A.S.**  
**Faculty of Communication  
and Public Relations**

New Perspectives on the Study of Political  
Communication

Blogs as Sources for Political News

The Making of the 'Soft Villain' in a *Time* Magazine  
Headline

The Building of a European Identity and Its  
Challenges

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Remus PRICOPIE\*

***Laudatio* of Professor Jan Sadlak on the  
Occasion of the Ceremony of Awarding the  
Title of Doctor Honoris Causa by the  
National School of Political Studies and Public Administration**

Professor Sadlak has more than twenty-five years of experience in the field of higher education, international relations and economics. He is a member of the editorial boards of leading journals in the fields of higher education and social policy, among which, Higher Education Management (published by OECD). He is a member of governing and advisory boards of various organizations, such as: ESMU-European Centre for Strategic Management of Universities, Belgium, and the Scientific Board of the Higher Education Management Program, at the Danube University Krems, Austria. He holds a Ph.D. in Educational Administration and Comparative Education from the SUNY / University of Buffalo, USA, and a M.A. in Economics from “Oskar Lange” Academy of Economics in Wroclaw, Poland. He was awarded several high-level distinctions and five honorary doctorates (Doctor Honoris Causa), among which, one from “Babes-Bolyai” University of Cluj-Napoca and one from “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu.

He was the Director of UNESCO – European Centre for Higher Education (UNESCO-CEPES) in Bucharest and Representative of UNESCO in Romania (1999–2009). He is currently Vice-Rector for International Cooperation at the Warsaw Academy of Social Sciences and Humanities. He is a Visiting Professor at the Faculty of European Studies of “Babes-Bolyai” University in Cluj-Napoca. In October 2009, he was elected as the President of the IREG Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence.

On May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010, Professor Jan Sadlak was awarded the title of Doctor Honoris Causa by the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest, Romania. The ceremony took place at the Central University Library of Bucharest. We reproduce in this number of the Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations, the *Laudatio* speech given by Professor Remus Pricopie, Dean of the College of Communication and Public Relations, National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, and the Acceptance speech given by Professor Jan Sadlak.

\* Professor, Dean of the College of Communication and Public Relations, National School of Political Studies and Public Administration.

Your Excellences,  
 Dear Members of the Parliament,  
 Dear Ministers,  
 Distinguished Guests,  
 Ladies and Gentlemen,  
 Dear Colleagues and Students,  
 Dear Professor Sadlak,

Please, allow me to begin with a confession. Among the many tasks that I have undertaken with deep joy and emotion during my career, this one holds a special place. It is not only the academic community of SNSPA that holds Professor Sadlak in high esteem, this great assembly is the undeniable proof that he has won the respect and admiration of many Romanian and international personalities of the academic and cultural world, of scientists, diplomats, and politicians. Some of them have joined us today; those who have not been able to, have sent dozens of congratulation messages, acknowledging the remarkable achievements of a remarkable personality. I am glad and honored to have been the one called upon to portray, in a few words, the profile of an outstanding individual, that has already become part of the international academic elite.

However, I come before you today not without certain unease. First of all, most of you have long known the person we celebrate here today, have worked with him, have grown to appreciate him and developed their own image of *who Jan Sadlak is*.

*Alas!* no speech would be able to include all these perspectives. And then, considering the complex personality and accomplishments of Jan Sadlak, I would like to think that anyone asked to write this *Laudatio* would have felt a little anxious because of the challenge undertaken. Therefore, should you feel that this *Laudatio* has come short of capturing all the elements, all the nuances needed to complete such a complex portray, please give help me and, during today's celebrations, step in and emphasize those aspects that have escaped me or which I may not know. I believe that in this way we'll be able to complete our mission for today: respectively, to portray the academic, professional and moral profile of Professor Jan Sadlak.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Looking at the blank piece of paper raised an unavoidable question: Where to start? Should I begin with the moment I met Professor Sadlak, should I begin by introducing his works of reference in higher education or should I start by underlying his achievements in international higher education?

Reflecting on these options, I have decided to begin with my first contact with Jan Sadlak. It was not a face-to-face meeting, but a "*literary*" one, in the Library of Congress in Washington D.C., some years ago, when I was working on the paper that my mentor at George Washington University, Graduate School of Education and Human Development, Professor Jim Williams, had asked me to write on rebuilding the history and evolution of the Romanian universities. There, in the library, I found two excellent works:

1. "Planning of Higher Education in Countries With a Centrally Planned Socioeconomic System: Case Study of Poland and Romania", Jan Sadlak's PhD dissertation, defended in 1988 at the State University of New York at Buffalo, before a Committee comprising Professor Philip G. Altbach, Professor Bruce D. Johnstone and Professor Gail P. Kelly, all three worldwide leading personalities in International Higher Education, and

2. “Higher Education in Romania, 1860-1990: Between Academic Mission, Economic Demands and Political Control”, also authored by Jan Sadlak, and published by the State University of New York at Buffalo, in November 1990.

Before talking about the works themselves, I would like to make an observation. Unfortunately, in the collection of the Library of Congress, there are a surprisingly small number of papers and books written about Romania, in general, and about the Romanian higher education, in particular. Among the authors present there, I should mention: Cezar Birzea, Mihai Botez, Dumitru Chitoran, George Dinca, Paul Dobrescu, Mihai Korca, Mircea Malita, Andrei Marga, Adrian Miroiu, Ioan Mihailescu, Vasile Puscas, Ana Maria Sandi, Jan Sadlak, and only a few several others. Jan Sadlak was the only author who was not Romanian and who constantly wrote about the Romanian academic system, before and after 1989.

Why have I mentioned these two works of Professor Sadlak? The first work, *Planning of Higher Education in Countries With a Centrally Planned Socioeconomic System: Case Study of Poland and Romania* is remarkable through its richness in statistical data and facts about two of the communist countries of that time, all analyzed in a critical manner. I appreciate his efforts to gather all that plethora of statistical information about Romania in a time when transparency was not a value. Going beyond the empirical research conducted by the doctoral student Jan Sadlak, the reader may notice the bold and elegant manner in which the concept of planning in higher education (a concept borrowed from the so-called “Soviet model”, which has its roots in the Marxist-Leninist ideology, and according to which education should have the social and cultural role in the transformation of the Communist societies) was criticized and exposed as a tool for the control of the academic community by the central power. The array of transformations of universities in Poland and Romania is carefully reconstructed and analyzed starting with 1947, mainly focusing on the sensitive relations between the new political regime in the two countries and the classical academic values (academic freedom and university autonomy). The organization of the universities, the manner in which curricula were designed along with the relationship between academia and the communist regime, all came under the scrutiny of the then doctoral student Jan Sadlak. The multidisciplinary dissertation makes use of specific scientific instruments, traditionally employed by historians, economists, experts in international comparative education and in political science. This work, which has never been published in Romanian, is today one of the few documents in a wider international array that try to explain what happened in the higher education sector in two of the communist countries, from the late ‘40s until the ‘80s.

The second work, *Higher Education in Romania, 1860-1990: Between Academic Mission, Economic Demands and Political Control*, published by the State University of New York at Buffalo, in November 1990, has its own significant contributions to the field of higher education, not only by presenting new data, but also through its unique perspective and the year the work was published.

In 1990, Romania had begun to recover from a 42-year communist dictatorship. We were in a time when we tried to find way, while passing, on one hand, through effervescent moments fueled by the desire to find normality, but on the other hand, through confusing moments, fueled by fear that we may be powerless in our attempt to rebuild what we had lost. At that time, Romania was in great need of points of reference and of support. The work of Jan Sadlak has both the historical landmarks from which the reconstruction of higher education system in Romania was to start, and the moral support and encouragement that Romania needed

in order to be able to pass through a new process of institutional transformation. It is more than a point of reference and moral support when a foreign researcher reminded us, Romanians, in 1990 that our universities had hosted professors such as Mihail Kogalniceanu, Victor Babes, Ion Cantacuzino, Spiru Haret, Nicolae Iorga, and the list goes on. It was only with great confidence that Romanians could think about the future when the same author reminded us that the endeavor of Alexandru Ioan Cuza to redefine modern Romanian higher education by founding Romanian universities in Iasi and Bucharest was one of the most visible and complex processes in the 19th Century in Europe. The same international authority, Jan Sadlak, made Romanians even more secure about their positive evolution when he let us know that, in fact, although communists tortured the Romanian academic community, they did not succeed in destroying the spirit of *academia*, and that, under the communist regime, the main science and engineering higher education institutions have managed to maintain their international academic reputation. This also represents one of the key reasons why Romania became, in 1981, one of the main attractions for foreign students. The author also reminded us that, during the communist regime, Romania had the chance to have appointed a minister of education like Mircea Malita, a well-known personality in the area of higher education and research, who had the wisdom, authority and the influence to establish and maintain UNESCO-CEPES in Bucharest – UNESCO's specialized center for promoting policies for higher education in the European area.

I have selected a short paragraph from Dr. Sadlak's work to exemplify the way the author referred to the Romanian academic community in 1990: "[...] students and some of their teachers and other academics, especially those in Bucharest, during the events that occurred at the end of December 1989, acted as vanguards of the revolution which, with the support of the army, brought down the communist regime in Romania. It shows that opposition is possible and that, despite long indoctrination, intellectual isolation and physical intimidation, there are some members of the academic community who share a genuine desire for academic freedom, truth and excellence in teaching and research, who feel the need for the respect of academic autonomy, and who want to prevent universities from being used mainly for political ends or narrowly interpreted economic needs. It looks that their persistence in the struggle for democratic changes has not been diminished by current internal political strife and economic difficulties". The author does not make any empty statements, but comes up with clear data and evidence, placing the Romanian education system in a matrix rigorously built on scientific arguments.

Unfortunately, this document was not published in Romanian, either. However, it was familiar to the Romanian policy and decision makers who started the reform process in the early '90s, and who integrated many ideas contained in Jan Sadlak's work into the public policy documents they had drawn up.

After reading these two works, I was wondering who Jan Sadlak really was. Sure, I knew at that time that he was the Director of UNESCO-CEPES, but I did not have enough biographical details in order to understand the real value of his scientific contributions and his interest for Romania before and after 1989. I have learned all these over time, and many of the details presented here were told to me by Professor Sadlak himself, as for example, his first experience in Romania in 1974. At that time, young Sadlak was one of the first UNESCO international officials who came to Bucharest following the establishment of the UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education – CEPES in 1972. Prior to this position, Jan Sadlak

had received an M.A. degree in Economics in 1968 from the “Oskar Lange” Academy of Economics in Wroclaw, Poland (currently called the Wroclaw University of Economics). He had also obtained a Postgraduate Diploma from the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences of the University of Zurich, Switzerland, where he had studied between 1971-1972. From 1972 to 1974, Dr. Sadlak worked as a senior assistant at the Faculty of Management and Organization at the Technical University of Wroclaw, in Poland.

Six years of experience at UNESCO-CEPES have left a significant mark on the academic and professional career of the young international official. In the UNESCO-CEPES, Dr. Sadlak was able to focus with professionalism and from an international perspective on higher education issues, using the comparative approach as the main tool. Here, he came into contact with the field literature, and was able to identify the main trends of thought of the time. Last but not least, here he also had the opportunity to get in contact with many personalities in the field of education and with their work.

This immersion into the world of international higher education has increased Dr. Sadlak’s interest in advancing the research of the field. Thus, between 1983 and 1985 we find Dr. Sadlak at the School of Education, from the State University of New York at Buffalo / University of Buffalo, USA, as a research and teaching assistant and a Ph.D. student. Between 1985 and 1988, Dr. Sadlak served as Executive Secretary of the Standing Conference of Rectors, Presidents and Vice-Chancellors of the European Universities – CRE, Geneva, Switzerland, and, between 1989-1992, as a Visiting Scholar and Associate Professor at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education / University of Toronto, Canada. In 1992, he returns to UNESCO where he is appointed as Senior Programme Specialist and Chief of the Section for Higher Education Policy and Reform in UNESCO, Paris, until 1999 when, Federico Mayor, UNESCO Director-General at the time (1987-1999), granted him the high responsibilities of leading UNESCO-CEPES and of representing UNESCO in Romania. This mission concluded with the retirement of Professor Sadlak in July 2009.

When I learned more about the origins and nature of the scientific foundation of his achievements, I focused with even greater interest on analyzing his academic work. Thus, I discovered that most of Jan Sadlak’s works represent a kind of barometer of the higher education in Romania, in the region and, at the same time, a sort of a road map of what should be done in the future. Examples are numerous, but as my time is limited, I will share with you only one:

In September 1992, at The International Conference on the History of Universities, in Gent, Belgium, Dr. Sadlak presented the paper called “Students in Poland and Romania since the End of World War II: Highly-qualified Manpower, New Intelligentia or Just Students”. In 34 pages Dr. Sadlak shows, the historical evolution of the Polish and Romanian students during the Communist regimes in Warsaw and Bucharest, a complex analysis based on abundant, but carefully selected, historical data. Certainly, the paper has an exceptional value, especially if we consider it in the context of the present. After the communist regime ended, it seemed necessary to evaluate what had happened and to begin to reconstruct decades of history of higher education. However, if one would re-read this paper now, almost twenty years after it was written, he/she would be surprised not only by the ability of the author to understand the past, but especially that of decrypting the future. Yet again, to avoid altering the author’s message, I chose to exemplify this with an excerpt from the conclusions of this paper, published, mind this, in September 1992: “The adaptation of higher education to the rapidly advancing economic and scientific integration of Europe implies the need for the re-

adjustment of students and studying to these developments. The introduction of the credit system, as well as undergraduate and graduate degrees based on the model used by the American research universities, is one example of the direction of this process. More importantly, the on-going overhaul of higher education in Poland and Romania should be seen as a part of the structural transformation of these countries to the iron rules of market economy and development of democratic society, based on adequately educated middle-class. This process will have to deal with such student questions as what proportion of college-age population should attend higher education and to which level a society is ready to share the cost of historically non-tuition public higher education. It is not yet clear what answers will be formulated. The search for socially acceptable and economically feasible solutions is hampered by the disastrous situation of the public purse, lack of accreditation mechanisms and legislative process and frequent changes in composition of the governments. It can only be expected that despite all these difficulties the conditions in which students will function as essential member of any viable academic common societal good as highly-qualified manpower and educated members of society. It can also be hoped that their country's historical experience in this regard will be a lesson and an inspiration in this endeavor".

Reading this text, now in 2010, it is not hard to see that, in fact, in a paragraph written in 1992, Dr. Sadlak had described the areas in higher education that were subject to structural reforms in Romania and in many other countries in this region. The transferable credit system, the restructuring of the cycles of study into a more flexible undergraduate, graduate, doctoral-type formula, the need to identify alternative financing sources for higher education, such as the introduction of tuition fees in the state-financed universities and the implementation of student loan schemes, the massification of higher education and the introduction of university assessment systems, the development of the student-centered education, etc., are all educational policies promoted by various governments over the past two decades and identified as possible solutions by Dr. Sadlak as early as 1992.

I feel the need to make a clarification. It is true that Professor Sadlak has spent a good part of his career writing about the higher education systems in Romania, Poland and Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to think that this was the central axis of his research interests. If we take a look at the topics studied and promoted through academic research by Professor Jan Sadlak we'll see that he was equally interested in academic networks, comparative approaches between Western and Eastern countries, higher education systems in OECD countries, transfer of technology, science parks and centers of excellence (a topic that we now talk about quite extensively, while Dr. Sadlak wrote about it in 1992), diversification of higher education (1994), cooperation between higher education and industry (1997), the financing of higher education, globalization of higher education (1998), innovation, academic freedom, academic values, public responsibility, transparency, international rankings, and much more.

In addition, I think that, in assessing Professor Sadlak's contribution to the advancement of higher education in the European Region and worldwide, one must consider not only what he has written over the years, but also the platforms of discussion and cooperation that he created or supported. A relevant example would be *Higher Education in Europe*, first published in 1976 as a bulletin of information on higher education and developed over time in an important scientific journal, a landmark in the European area of higher education.

Another aspect that I would like to emphasize is that the young Ph.D. candidate in Comparative Education and Educational Administration has also left deep marks at the School of Education, of the State University of New York at Buffalo, USA. I had the privilege to visit this university several times and to meet Professor Bruce Johnstone, one of the scientific referents for the doctoral dissertation of Jan Sadlak. There I was told that, in many ways, Professor Sadlak had opened the collaboration between the research center at Buffalo and various other research centers in Europe, including CEPES.

After his return to UNESCO, in 1992, Dr. Sadlak served as a program specialist in the Division of Higher Education, contributing to the progress of various projects of significant impact. Perhaps among the most relevant is the First World Conference on Higher Education held in 1998 in Paris. Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO at that time, appreciated the contribution of Dr. Sadlak at that international event and, as a proof of his appreciation, he granted him the high responsibility of leading UNESCO-CEPES in Bucharest and to be UNESCO's Representative in Romania. Returned to Bucharest, a place already familiar and dear, Dr. Sadlak continued his work of promoter and catalyst for the new ideas in higher education.

During the 10 years spent in Bucharest, Jan Sadlak organized at UNESCO-CEPES, in collaboration with various national, regional and/or international bodies, 64 international events on: bilingual university; networking for the European space of higher education; institutional approaches to teacher education (2000); quality of higher education; inter-regional relations in education, science, culture and communication; new higher education institutions and their role in local and regional development; Lisbon Recognition Convention; statistical indicators for higher/tertiary education; virtual university (2001); brain drain and the academic and intellectual labor market; governance and management of higher education; indicators for institutional and program accreditation in higher education; strategic management in universities; statistical indicators for quality assessment of higher education institutions – ranking and league tables methodologies; the role of higher education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; European model of management of higher education; quality assurance and the development of study programs (2002) and the list continues and concludes in 2009 with the organization of the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education in the European Region: “Access, Values, Quality and Competitiveness”, convened in the context of the 2009 *World Conference on Higher Education*, organized in Paris.

Most of these events were supported by a series of articles that appeared in the 40 issues of *Higher Education in Europe* published during the mandate of Dr. Sadlak at CEPES and in dozens of publications such as monographs, working papers, studies on higher education, studies on science and culture, etc. To this list we could add the contribution that UNESCO – CEPES, under the leadership of Professor Sadlak, has had in the development and works of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the Bologna Process.

Of course, the quantity is not the most significant element of this presentation. And, of course, considering Professor Sadlak's work – it couldn't be. But what I really think we need to quantify – and that should not make the object of a *Laudatio*, but of a major scientific research – is the impact that all these conferences, seminars, workshops, scientific journals and publications created and / or coordinated by Jan Sadlak produced not only in this region, but also worldwide. It will be a duty for us, the young generation, to undertake this task and continue what Professor Sadlak has started.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

July 15, 2009 was Director Jan Sadlak's last working day at the UNESCO-CEPES. It was a little past 6 p.m., and I was working in my office at the Ministry of Education. I knew from Dr. Sadlak that he had reserved all that afternoon to clean up his office and organize the stuff to be shipped to Paris – mostly books, of course. I thought it might be nice to keep him some company. So, I got two cans of beer (*well, we were off-duty, after all!*), and I went to the UNESCO – CEPES. As always, he was glad to see me, although I slowed him down for the next couple of hours. Surrounded by books and documents, at some point we came across a letter that Dr. Sadlak had received in 1991 from Edward Shils, a distinguished sociologist of the University of Chicago and of the Oxford University, at that time, editor of a leading research journal – *Minerva – A Review of Science, Learning and Policy*. The letter referred to an article that Dr. Sadlak had submitted to this journal, and Edward Shils, who was known for his sharp, straightforward style, was returning it for revisions. Dr. Sadlak confessed to me: "It was not easy to accept his straightforward criticisms, but you could not, but admire his effort to study your manuscript. I keep the correspondence with him related to my papers as a testimony of the way academic critique should be carried out. It was a hard, but very useful experience of academic maturity". The article referred to was published in 1991, under the title "The Use and Abuse of the University: Higher Education in Romania, 1860-1990", and is a piece of academic work that is worth reading.

Although I knew Dr. Sadlak's work style, it was then and there that I realized success is not only work, but work well done. In the same time, it occurred to me that it also takes courage, and maybe *inspiration*, not necessarily for developing great ideas, but mostly for developing great *partnerships*. Partnerships for life, with great, exceptional people, that could teach you a thing or two, and with whom to explore your *great ideas*. I remember how Dr. Sadlak has expressed so many times his appreciation for Rene Maheu and Federico Mayor, exceptional Directors General of UNESCO, who are probably now part of the world cultural heritage for their ideas and their deeds. I also remember Dr. Sadlak telling me how he had met Clark Kerr, an American professor of economics and academic administrator, the first chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley and twelfth president of the University of California. More than a few times I witnessed Dr. Sadlak expressing his deep appreciation and respect for Professor Malita, as well as for Denis L. Meadows, significant member of the Club of Rome and co-author of the well-known report *Limits to Growth*. And these are but a few of the people that Dr. Sadlak holds in high esteem.

As proofs that Dr. Sadlak has been successful in his endeavors, there are the numerous acknowledgements from international organizations – from being accepted in different Academies of Science (for example, the European Academy of Arts, Science and Humanities, Paris, France; the World Academy of Arts and Science, San Francisco, USA) and prestigious associations (such as the European Centre for Strategic Management of Universities, Brussels, Belgium; International Ranking Experts Group – of which, in fact, he is the president), to becoming member of the editorial boards of leading journals in the field of higher education and social policy, among which: *Higher Education Management* [published by OECD], *Science and Society* [published by the European Academy of Sciences, Arts and Humanities]; *Journal of Studies in International Education* [published by the Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education (NUFFIC)].

Last, but not least, proofs of the great appreciation that Professor Sadlak enjoys are also the other five Titles of Doctor Honoris Causa that he has been awarded by universities from Romania, Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe that it is our responsibility, as academics, to acknowledge the exceptional work of exceptional people. And, at the same time, it is our duty to bring excellence into the Romanian academic community. By awarding to Professor Sadlak the Title of Doctor Honoris Causa, we not only acknowledge his remarkable achievements, but also bring him closer to the academic community of SNSPA and, why not, of the other Romanian universities.

Thank you very much for your attention!