

il Presidente permanente dell'Unione, potranno contribuire a rendere l'Unione una realtà più vicina alla vita quotidiana dei cittadini europei. L'Unione, inoltre, diventerà in generale più democratica. Ad esempio, il progetto costituzionale contiene un nuovo articolo sulla democrazia partecipativa: se un milione di cittadini di un numero "significativo" di stati sottoscrive una determinata petizione, sarà possibile richiedere alla Commissione di avanzare una relativa proposta legislativa.

La nuova Costituzione darà l'assetto definitivo all'Europa di domani?

L'eventuale approvazione del trattato istitutivo della Costituzione per l'Europa, alla metà di giugno 2004, non rappresenta certo la fine del processo di sviluppo costituzionale dell'Unione europea. La discussione proseguirà su ulteriori modifiche, non appena se ne presenterà la necessità. In ogni caso, per i prossimi anni vivremo ancora con la "vecchia costituzione", il sistema previsto dal trattato di Nizza. Prima di entrare in vigore, la nuova Costituzione dovrà essere ratificata da tutti i 25 stati membri dell'Unione, secondo i meccanismi previsti dalle singole costituzioni nazionali. Per stati come l'Irlanda o la Danimarca questo include anche la possibilità di indire un referendum. Comunque, ci sono segni che anche stati come la Repubblica Ceca, la Spagna, il Lussemburgo, l'Olanda, e – come appare adesso – persino il Regno Unito potrebbero sottoporre la nuova Costituzione a un referendum! Ciò significa che molto probabilmente ci vorranno ancora circa due anni prima che la costituzione entri in vigore e in teoria potrebbe esserci la necessità di dover rinegoziare alcuni punti del trattato in caso emergessero resistenze politiche durante questa complessa fase di ratifica. La Costituzione stabilisce che se soltanto 4/5 dei paesi membri hanno ratificato il testo entro due anni dalla sua approvazione, i leader dell'Ue si devono riunire un'altra volta per discutere come risolvere la situazione. Si tratta dunque di una storia non soltanto molto complessa, ma anche piuttosto lunga.

Intervista di Sigrid Hechensteiner

The Stolen National Flag

When Communism took over in Eastern Europe, national symbols were systematically replaced with communist symbols. With the democratic turn in 1989, many former communist countries reintroduced their old national symbols (such as national anthems and flags). In some cases, that wasn't enough of a change. Four EURAC-researchers present the fascinating stories of their national symbols.

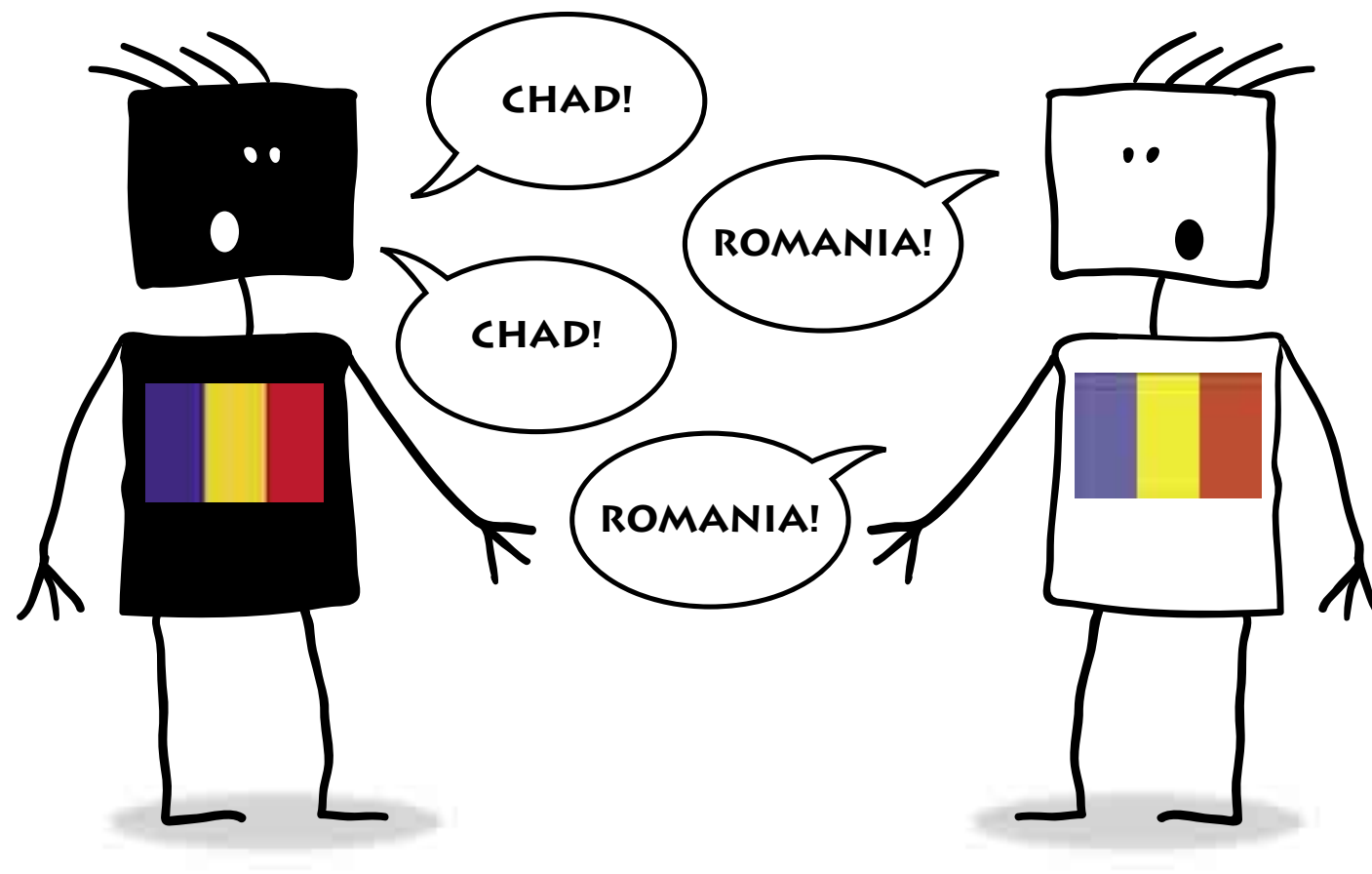
Romania

As early as 1848, Romanians (at that time Romania wasn't a unified and independent state) used a flag with blue, yellow and red vertical stripes. Later in the 19th century, Romania became an independent state and declared the *Tricolor* as the official national flag. Under the communist regime established in 1947, the hammer and sickle were superimposed upon the background. When Romania's dictator Ceausescu was overthrown in 1989, Romania dropped the additional insignia, but unfortunately, the original flag had been claimed by the African country Chad (which became independent in 1960) in the meantime. Both flags, in fact, were inspired by the French flag. As neither country is willing to give up one of their most important symbols, there are at least two possibilities for resolving this dispute: Either through international litigation (flags are protected as "intellectual property") or the Solomonic conclusion that Romania's *albastru* colour is a slightly lighter shade of blue than Chad's...

The Romanian national anthem from the end of World War II through December

1989 (the Communist anthem) was "Trei culori" ("Three colours"), with music by composer Ciprian Porumbescu. The Communists modified the song's original text to better suit their ideology. The lyrics were so pedantic that they don't deserve much attention: "our three colours remind us of our glorious, hardworking, free people, united around the Communist Party that builds socialism for us. We crush our enemies, but we want to live in peace with other nations so our beloved Romania can shine like a star." "Horrible! And imagine, when I was a child I was forced to hear or sing this anthem at least once a day", remembers EURAC researcher Sergiu Constantin, who was born and raised in Romania.

The current Romanian national anthem is "Desteapta-te romane" ("Awaken Thee, Romanian") a revolutionary song from 1848. The lyrics were written by Andrei Muresan (1816-1863), a Romantic poet, journalist, translator, and genuine herald of the times marked by the 1848 Revolution, while the music was composed by Anton Pann (1796-1854), a poet, ethnographer and author of music



textbooks. As it was composed in the 19th century, a period of revival for the national movement, it has less of a social than a national message. The key words are "now or never": now or never fight against the tyrants and enemies (the surrounding empires, especially the Ottomans) and now or never prove that you have Roman blood in your veins (Romanians sacred Latin origins making it an island in the East). A partial pantheon is listed in the lyrics: Trajan (the Roman emperor who conquered Dacia and became a founding father of the Romanian nation) as well as Michael, Stephen, and Corvinus (the medieval princes of Walachia, Moldova and Transylvania who fought the Turks). The finale is heroic and Christian at the same time: the priests raise the crosses before the Christian army; their word is "freedom" and they swear to "die in battle, in elevated glory, rather than live again enslaved on our ancestral land." During the bloody events of December 1989, this song rose from the streets, making it a simple, pragmatic decision to declare it the national anthem – the Communist one had to be changed

immediately, and no one was prepared to spend much time discussing the issue while tanks were firing in the streets.

Czechoslovakia

The Czech national anthem from 1919 and through the communist period was "Where is My Home?/There is Lightning Over the Tatra". The need for a change came with the division of the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993. The two nations split the anthem right down the middle! The Czech Republic kept the first verse of the song, "Where is My Home?" (Kde domov můj) from the musical theatre piece "Fidlovačka" (1834). Meanwhile, Slovakia uses the second verse "There is Lightning Over the Tatra" (Nad Tatrou sa blýska), which arose in 1844 during a campaign of the students at the Evangelic Lutheran Lyceum of Bratislava. While the Czech lyrics are a rather apolitical celebration of the Czech landscape's beauty, the Slovak anthem employs the image of lightning as a proclamation, a call for revolution and for a free Slovakia. Regardless of their content, both anthems remain very popular.

Bosnia

A specialised solution was also necessary in selecting the Bosnian national anthem. After the war, many tough questions had to be solved in the Dayton agreement. All the proposed lyrics for a new national anthem were found too controversial, so the nation's three ethnic groups (Croats, Muslims and Serbs) finally gave up. As a result, today Bosnians have to "hum the hymn".

Croatia

In comparison, Croatia's anthem, which dates from the country's romantic period in the 19th century, was found to require just one minor amendment: The Adriatic Coast, which has become so important since the original lyric was written, had to be mentioned! Thus, in 1991 a single verse was changed to praise the sea as a core element of Croatian identity.