

Mikheil Muskhelishvili at the Beginning of European Federalism

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(Presented by Academy Member Liana Melikishvili)

Abstract. This work sheds light on the activity of the Georgian scientist Mikheil Muskhelishvili, based on the analysis of the documents preserved at the University of Strasbourg and the National Archives of Alsace, as well as Georgian and French periodicals. Known in as Michel Mouskhely, the French politician, scientist, and international law specialist of Georgian origin, along with other European activists stood at the origins of European federalism. In 1959, he founded the Center for Research on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe at the University of Strasbourg, known as the “Mouskhely Center”. M. Mouskhely was an active member of the European federalist movement. He considered the successful functioning of democratic states based on broad federal principles as the political basis for the creation and development of a united Europe. Later, this theory became the basis for the European Union that exists today. M. Mouskhely's own ideas also practically implemented this. His main goal was to destroy stereotypes, restore trust between European countries and build a united Europe. The study is mainly focused on M. Mouskhely's role in the development of European ideas. Based on his contribution, he can be regarded as one of the founding fathers of the European Union. Therefore, it is desirable to unveil his star in front of the Council of Europe building, where the words spoken in French by M. Mouskhely at the First Congress of University Federalists in Strasbourg on April 9, 1949 will be recorded and a memorial plaque on the M. Mouskhely's house in Strasbourg. His ideas are even more relevant in today's world. M. Mouskhely's views on European federalism are especially relevant today, when the global economic and political crisis in the world threatens to collapse the European Union. © 2025 *Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.*

Keywords: Georgia, European federalism, European integration, M. Mouskhely

Introduction

The term “European federalism” refers to a political movement that, like Robert Schuman's project for the European Federation, aims to build a federal Europe. One of the first practical and successful proposals for European cooperation emerged in 1951, with the European Coal and Steel Community. At present, the European Union is not legally

(de jure) a federation, although most modern researchers have argued that it contains some federal characteristics.

Mikheil Muskhelishvili (known in France as Michel Mouskhely, 1903-1964), a French politician, scholar and specialist in international law with Georgian background, stood at the origins of European federalism. After the occupation of Georgia

by the Soviet Russian army, M. Muskhelishvili emigrated. From October 1921, he studied in Germany at the Universities of Göttingen and Munich, and then in France at the Universities of Lyon and Paris. He graduated from the University of Paris in 1927 with a Bachelor of Laws degree, and in 1931 he was awarded a Doctor of Laws degree from the University of Paris under the supervision of Louis Le Four [1]. He became a French citizen in 1932. In 1930 he married Nina Lysenko, a nurse by profession. In 1932-1933, he lectured at the Institute of International Studies of the University of Paris, and in 1940-1948, at the French Law School of Cairo University. In 1948-1964, he became a professor at the Faculty of Law, Political and Economic Sciences of Strasbourg [2]. He organized numerous conferences on the subject of European federalism at major universities in Germany, Switzerland, Norway, and Italy. At the same time, he taught as a visiting professor at American universities from 1953 to 1964.

M. Mouskhely considered the successful functioning of democratic states based on broad federal principles as the political basis for the creation and development of a united Europe. Later this theory became the basis for the European Union that exists today. The primacy of individual freedom and the rule of law was central to him in a federal democracy. According to M. Mouskhely, Europeanness is defined not by geography, not by race, not by language and customs, but by certain qualities of its soul. M. Mouskhely dedicated many works to the idea of the united Europe, including his doctoral dissertation, which he successfully defended in 1931 at the University of Paris, under the supervision of Louis Le Four. M. Mouskhely was the chairman of the Interuniversity Federalist Union of Europe. The Hague Congress in 1948 was one of the most important events in the history of European integration, leading to the creation of the Council of Europe in May 1949. The agenda included the issue of the draft European constitution. In March 1948, Michel Mouskhely and

Gaston Stefani [3], also in June 1948, François de Menthon created the drafts constitutions for a federal Europe [4], which led to the creation of a supranational political and economic union – the European Union, in April 1951.

Michel Mouskhely's own ideas also practically implemented this. His main goal was to destroy stereotypes, restore trust between European countries and build a united Europe. On 10 April 1949, the first congress of the Union of University Federalists opened in Strasbourg. The chairman of the congress was M. Mouskhely, a professor at the Faculty of Law of the University of Strasbourg. There were 35 university students in the hall, representing eleven nations (Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Greece, the Baltic States, Italy, England, Germany and France). M. Mouskhely thanked the participants of the Congress, as well as the rector of the University of Strasbourg, René Hubert, who in turn represented the Minister of National Education of France, Yvon Delbos. M. Mouskhely began his speech with a quote from the French anarchist and philosopher Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: "The twentieth century will either open the era of federations, or humanity will once again begin its purification of thousand-years". The speaker noted that the federalist movement was only being formed, and much remained to be done. In his opinion, the goal of the Congress was to unite groups loyal to the federal forces into a single block that would allow them to work effectively. The issue, the speaker continued, was the formation of the elite, which would be inspired by a truly federalist spirit; therefore, it was necessary to prepare leaders for international organizations. M. Mouskhely addressed the participants of the Congress with a historical appeal to build the world just and better which is still relevant today [5].

During the World War II, Strasbourg was occupied by the German army in June 1940. Since the liberation of the city by the 2nd French Armoured Division under General Leclerc in November 1944, it has again been a French city. Because of this, they

criticized the presence of the German delegation at the Congress. There was also an incident at the Congress. During the speech by Dietze, the rector of the University of Fribourg, one of the delegates protested against the participation of German representatives. "Federalism, yes", he exclaimed, "but not with the les Boches...". The incident caused confusion among the delegates. The chairman of the session, M. Mouskhely intervened and called on the congress delegates to remain calm. He said: "We are here to ensure that such misunderstandings do not happen again", after which the hall burst into applause [5]. The term "Boches" was used in reference to the Germans, a derogatory slang term for German soldiers. In his speech, delivered in French and English, Freiburg University Rector Dietze stressed that because of their hostility to Nazism, the Germans themselves became victims of concentration camps [5].

The work of the Congress was widely covered in the French press of the time. On April 9, 1949, a group of Congress participants sent a letter of complaint against M. Mouskhely to the then mayor of Strasbourg, Charles Frey, which stated: "... As you know, Mr. Mouskhely organized and chaired the congress of the University Federalist Union in our city. He considered it natural to invite official representatives of seventeen German universities to this congress, on his own initiative and without warning the government... Unlike Mr Mouskhely and his representative group, we consider the entry of the Germans into the capital of Alsace premature". The letter of protest was signed by: Charles Authier, Dean of the Faculty of Protestant Theology; Marcel Simon, Dean of the Faculty of Philology; Jacques Callot, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine; Joseph Denoyez, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Law; Jean Lassot, Professor of the Faculty of Philology and President of the Committee for the Support of Student Initiatives [6]. In connection with the above-described incident, a letter was sent to the Director General of the Department of Higher Education of the Minis-

try of Education of France, Mr. Donzelo. The issue was also discussed in the administration of the University of Strasbourg, where M. Mouskhely worked and enjoyed great authority. "Our Georgian", that's what they called him at this university [2].

M. Mouskhely continued to actively fight for the idea of a federal Europe together with the youth. On August 6, 1950, 300 students gathered at the Franco-German border. The event was timed to coincide with the opening of the second session of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe. They were accompanied by numerous French and foreign journalists. The German students' group was led by the German professor Marcel Mille, while the French group was led by the president of the Union of University Federalists, professor of the University of Strasbourg, Michel Mouskhely. There were representatives of almost all European countries. They gathered in the commune of Schwabwiller. After a short stop, the procession moved towards Wissembourg. The demonstrators crossed the Weiler border and finally reached the French border. The demonstrators burned down customs posts and raised the European flag over their ashes. The young people held European flags and carried banners with the inscriptions: "Europe is here"; "We demand European citizenship"; "We demand the creation of a European parliament and government". Then they read out an appeal in three languages: French, English and German. They demanded the introduction of a European identity card [6]. M. Mouskhely asked the demonstrators to take an oath to continue the fight for European unity. The real result of this struggle was the Treaty of Rome of 1957, the main goal of which was the creation of a single European market. Barriers to foreign trade, the free movement of goods, persons, as well as services and capital between the member states of the economic union were removed. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, Europeans once again remembered M. Mouskhely's contribution and on September 9, 2007, the European memorial

was erected in St. Germanshof, where in 1950 M. Mouskhely organized the European March with young people. Today this place is called the “Place of the March to Europe” [7].

Together with other European leaders, M. Mouskhely worked actively to create the institutions that eventually led to the creation of the European Union. On 9 August 1950, under the leadership of M. Mouskhely, about 150 young Europeans gathered in front of the building of the European Consultative Assembly. They were welcomed by the President of the Assembly, the Belgian politician Paul-Henri Charles Spaak. The young people carried banners with the inscriptions: “We need a European Parliament to implement the Schuman Plan”; “We need a European government to organize defense”. The young Europeans were welcomed by the British statesman Winston Churchill. On the steps of the House of Europe, which was still considered the “European zone”, Michel Mouskhely and Charles Spaak took commemorative photos with the delegation [8].

On September 8, 1951, the Third Congress of the Union of University Federalists was held in the French city of Saverne (45 km northwest of Strasbourg), chaired by the President of the Union of University Federalists M. Mouskhely. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the issues of building a united Europe. The motto of the congress was: “United we will flourish, but divided we will perish”. Many countries were represented in the hall. The congress was opened by Michel Mouskhely. He noted, that the task of those gathered in Saverne was to awaken public opinion and study fundamental problems facing Europe. In his view, one of the most important things in the united Europe is the position of man. Indeed, man is threatened by science, technology, totalitarian tendencies; only a politically, economically and socially united Europe can fulfill the task of defending man” [9].

M. Mouskhely published numerous research works on European federalism in Georgian and French [10]. He was a tireless federalist activist: co-

founder of the Interuniversity Federalist Union, President of the Association of European Academics, President of the European People's Congress, founded by Altiero Spinelli, Vice-president of the International Center for European Training, founded by Alexandre Marc. He actively collaborated in the scientific journal: “L’Europe en formation”, which was founded in 1960 and his article was published in the very first issue. M. Mouskhely also discussed the legal status of occupied Georgia in his works. He concluded that Georgia had not lost its status as an independent state or as an international legal entity. He had in mind Article 17 of the USSR Constitution, according to which each allied republic retains the right to freely secede from the USSR [11].

On M. Mouskhely's initiative, in 1959, at the Faculty of Law, Political and Economic Sciences at the University of Strasbourg, the Center for Studies of the USSR and the Countries of Eastern Europe was created, known as “Centr Mouskhely”, which M. Mouskhely led until the end of his life [12]. The activity of the center continued until the mid 1960s. Later, part of the center's collection, which in 1970 comprised approximately 7000 works and the titles of 11 periodicals, was transferred to Strasbourg University [13].

The University College of Federalist Studies was founded in the Vallée d’Aoste in 1960, on the initiative of the director of the International Center for European Training, Alexandre Marc, and the Autonomous Region of the Aosta Valley. Michel Mouskhely, who was one of co-founders, collaborated with the aforementioned college. On July 11, 1964, he was on a field trip with college students that turned out to be fatal for him. His foot slipped, his body fell into a crevice several dozen meters below, and he died tragically [14]. Michel Mouskhely loved youth, Europe, and risk. Originally from Georgia, he often said, that he would rather disappear accidentally in the mountains than in any other way [15].

Michel Moukhély's contribution was highly appreciated by Alex Weill, Dean of the Faculty of

Law of the University of Strasbourg [16]. Professors Hans Plaikner and Anton Schatz wrote about him: "Federalism is the goal of life for Michel Moukhély. He devoted himself entirely to this noble cause... Speaking five languages, M. Mouskhély tirelessly carried the federal message to the various countries of free Europe, even to the USA" [17].

For his exceptional contribution to the creation and implementation of the idea of the European Union, on December 13, 2022, M. Muskhelishvili was awarded the "Presidential Order of Excellence".

To date, no agreement has been reached on the creation of a common constitution in Europe, and

this task is performed by the Treaty signed in Lisbon (Portugal) on 13 December 2007, which entered into force on 1 December, 2009. In such conditions, even greater importance is attached to the works of M. Mouskhely on European federalism, where the theoretical and practical foundations for the development of European supranationalism are clearly established.

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მეცნიერების ისტორია

მიხეილ მუსხელიშვილი ევროპული ფედერალიზმის სათავეებთან

ლ. სარალიძე

რეგიონალიზმის კვლევის ინსტიტუტი, თბილისი, საქართველო

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრის ლ. მელიქიშვილის მიერ)

ნაშრომში სტრასბურგის უნივერსიტეტსა და ალზასის ეროვნულ არქივში დაცული დოკუმენტების, ასევე, ქართული და ფრანგული პერიოდული მასალების ანალიზის საფუძველზე, ნაჩვენებია 1921 წლიდან ევროპაში მყოფი ქართველი მეცნიერის მიხეილ მუსხელიშვილის მოღვაწეობა. ევროპაში მიმდებარე მუსხელის სახელით ცნობილი, ქართული წარმოშობის ფრანგი პოლიტიკოსი, მეცნიერი, საერთაშორისო სამართლის სპეციალისტი, სხვა ევროპელ აქტივისტებთან ერთად ევროპული ფედერალიზმის სათავეებთან იდგა. 1959 წელს, სტრასბურგის უნივერსიტეტის იურიდიულ, პოლიტიკურ და ეკონომიკურ მეცნიერებათა ფაკულტეტზე სსრკ-ს და აღმოსავლეთ ევროპის ქვეყნების კვლევითი ცენტრი დაარსდა, რომელიც „მუსხელის ცენტრი“-ს სახელით არის ცნობილი. მ. მუსხელი ევროპის ფედერალისტთა მოძრაობის აქტიური წევრი იყო. იგი გაერთიანებული ევროპის შექმნისა და განვითარების პოლიტიკურ ბაზისად, ფართო ფედერალურ საწყისებზე დაფუძნებულ დემოკრატიულ სახელმწიფოთა

წარმატებულ ფუნქციონირებას მოიაზრებდა. საკუთარ იდეებს მ. მუსხელი პრაქტიკულადაც ახორციელებდა. მისი მთავარი მიზანი სტერეოტიპების მსხვერვა, ევროპულ ქვეყნებს შორის ნდობის აღდგენა და ერთიანი ევროპის აშენება იყო. კვლევა ძირითადად ორიენტირებულია ევროგაერთიანების საქმეში მიშელ მუსხელის როლის წარმოჩენაზე. მისი ღვაწლიდან გამომდინარე, იგი ერთმნიშვნელოვნად შეიძლება მივიჩნიოთ ევროპის გაერთიანების ერთ-ერთ მამამთავრად. აქედან გამომდინარე, სასურველია ევროპის საბჭოს შენობის წინ მისი ვარსკვლავის გახსნა, სადაც ჩაიწერება 1949 წლის 9 აპრილს, სტრასბურგში, პირველ საუნივერსიტეტო ფედერალისტთა კონგრესზე მიშელ მუსხელის მიერ ფრანგულ ენაზე წარმოთქმული სიტყვები, რომელიც დღეს კიდევ უფრო მეტად აქტუალურია. ასევე, მიზანშეწონილად მიგვაჩნია სტრასბურგში, მ. მუსხელის საცხოვრებელ სახლზე მემორიალური დაფის გახსნა. მ. მუსხელის ევროპული ფედერალიზმის იდეები, განსაკუთრებით საყურადღებოა დღეს, როდესაც მსოფლიოში არსებული ეკონომიკური და პოლიტიკური კრიზისი, ევროკავშირის დაშლით ემუქრება.

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