



# **The Forms of Secularism and the Nature of European Integration-**

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## **Abstract**

The objective of this dissertation is to shed further light on the nature of European integration by examining the relationship between religion and politics throughout the whole process. The thesis aims at answering the following research question: which forms of secularism have underpinned the process of European integration. Secularism is understood in the thesis as a public settlement between politics and religion (i.e. we can speak of secularism, if religious and political sphere are conceptually distinct).

A historical perspective allows the author to identify and examine the following junctures with respect to the relationship between religion and politics in the process: the Christian-democratic foundation of European Communities, the question of Turkish accession, the search for the "Soul of Europe" during Jacques Delors' presidency at the European Commission, the debate on the Treaty establishing Constitution for Europe, and last but not least: the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty with its art. 17 obliging European institutions to maintain dialogue with religious organisations.

Dissertation's findings indicate that three forms of secularism, rooted in the European intellectual and political history, might be identified in the discourse and practice of European integration: 1) Christian-democratic secularism – Christianity transformed by personalist thought is regarded as a cultural and symbolic basis of European integration; 2) Laicist secularism – religion seen as a challenge to the democratic political order; 3) Agnostic secularism – understood as an attempt to depoliticize religion, to delegate it to other bodies, e.g. Member States or international organizations. The author argues that the last concept, liberal in its nature, has been most successful throughout the whole process.



**Jury:** François Foret (Univ. Libre Bruxelles), Joseph Weiler (formerly EUI/NYU), Michał Matlak (candidate), O. Roy (EUI/RSCAS) (Supervisor)

**Bio**

Michał Matlak is a PhD researcher at the European University Institute in the Department of Political and Social Sciences, working with Prof. Olivier Roy. He holds a degree in humanities from the University of Wrocław. He was a visiting fellow at Princeton University, the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin and KU Leuven. His research focuses on the forms of secularism in the process European integration and various aspects of Europeanization. In 2016 he was awarded the Józef Tischner Fellowship at the Institute of Human Sciences in Vienna. He works at the European Parliament for the Chair of the Constitutional Affairs Committee.