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From the Editor

Belgrade, January 15th, 2026

Dear Readers, Authors, Reviewers, Language Editors, and Section Editors,

Between two consecutive issues of *MEST Journal*—particularly at the beginning of 2026, following the U.S. intervention in Venezuela and renewed debates on Greenland's future—the global economy and politics have continued to undergo rapid transformation. These complex processes of transition often appear contradictory.

Several key themes deserve heightened attention from the academic community: the geopolitical ambitions of major powers, uneven patterns of economic growth across regions, the paradoxes of European energy policy, and their implications for economic performance. Historical comparisons may serve as important warnings.

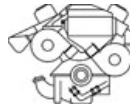
At a time when the United States imposes tariffs of several hundred percent and restricts Chinese products and manufacturers, Russian energy exports, and Venezuelan oil, global trade demonstrates resilience. It does not collapse but rather adapts and transforms. According to reports from the International Monetary Fund, global growth—though modest—remains stable, while trade flows continue to expand.

Behind this picture lies a series of paradoxes. The European Union occupies a special place in this context. By introducing broad sanctions on Russia, particularly in the purchase of fossil fuels, the EU has imposed constraints on itself. Consciously or not, it now finds itself purchasing fossil fuels at significantly higher prices than before the sanctions. The paradox is that part of its demand is still met by Russian energy, acquired through intermediaries at elevated costs. This paradox illustrates that the system does not collapse but expands through more expensive, complex, and politically charged channels.

The European Commission emphasizes in its energy reports that the goal is to reduce dependence on Russia and accelerate the transition to renewable sources. Yet dependence on fossil fuel suppliers is not eliminated but merely shifted—from Russia to the United States, Qatar, or other providers. This raises the question: to whom does the EU demonstrate diversification? Citizens, opponents, allies, or itself? If dependence is only transformed while costs rise, it is evident that economic rationality is being sacrificed for political objectives.

The shift to renewable energy is inevitable, but the choice of pathways and speed of implementation remains open to debate. The transition entails serious risks. In the short term, industry loses competitiveness, inflation rises, and households face higher bills. In the long term, if the transition is not sufficiently rapid, the EU risks sliding toward the periphery of the global economy.

Externally, the EU projects an image of unity, while internally each side pursues its own interests. This opens opportunities for researchers to draw comparisons with historical examples. Rhetoric about cohesion and readiness sounds strong, but without a well-designed and realistic plan, accompanied by disciplined implementation, it remains hollow. In Yugoslavia, the saying was often quoted: "*Work as if*



peace will last a hundred years but prepare as if war will break out tomorrow." In reality, preparations were not made. Today, the EU speaks of energy transition and independence, yet dependence on external fossil fuel suppliers inevitably persists, as such resources are not available in sufficient quantities within the Union.

Scenario analyses for the EU suggest three possible trajectories by mid-century. Industrial competitiveness is preserved only in the most optimistic scenario. The baseline scenario points to potential stagnation, with retention limited to high-tech sectors. The pessimistic scenario foresees deindustrialization, fragmentation, and loss of global relevance.

Looking ahead 20 or 50 years provides a clearer framework. If industry weakens now, regaining competitiveness later will be difficult. If dependence is merely shifted, it remains—and in the worst case may become even less favorable. Sanctions designed without deep consideration of consequences return as a boomerang.

It is therefore essential to illuminate the range of possibilities and recognize warning signals. Beyond economics, numerous other factors will shape the EU's future. The academic community has the responsibility to highlight these paradoxes, identify risks, and propose rational alternatives. This editorial thus calls for reflection on how to balance political cohesion with economic rationality.

MEST Journal will, within its means, continue to contribute to the dissemination of scientific thought and remain a platform for diverse perspectives and achievements. In this issue, 20 papers are published, 11 of which are co-authored. Seven papers originate from Algeria, offering readers insight into the work and accomplishments of Algerian researchers and contemporary developments in that region.

The journal has introduced a new design for article presentation. Alongside visual changes, it has adopted the APA 7 citation system. In addition to APA 7, readers are provided with citation options in Chicago 17th Edition, GOST R7.0.100-2018, Harvard Anglia Ruskin, and ISO 690 Numerical Reference styles. Our aim is to enhance visibility and facilitate citation of published works.

Due to the transition to the new design, updated templates will be available on the same website addresses as the previous versions, ensuring continuity for authors. In the coming period, calls will be announced for guest editors and members of the Scientific Board of *MEST Journal*.

We invite authors to publish with us—supported by comprehensive editorial guidance, free publication, and compliance with Creative Commons 4.0 principles. Thank you for joining us on this academic journey. Together, we strive to ensure that *MEST Journal* remains a hub of rigorous scientific analysis, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to research integrity and precision.

Warm regards,

Prof. Dr. Zoran Čekerevac
Editor-in-Chief