

Michaela Miroiu



Michaela Miroiu was selected for the 2011 Women Inspiring Europe Calendar.

In 1989, when her country opened up, Michaela Miroiu was 34. *“Already!”*, she exclaims today and you can hear a pinch of regret in her voice. A passionate scientist and argumentative mind, Miroiu had to take the toll of being trapped under the Soviet rule for the first half of her academic life.

Analytical, sharp-minded and with an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, Ms. Miroiu started soon to study the works of philosophers, sociologists and scientists as much as the regime would allow her. And sometimes, she even crossed the boundaries, making herself way to “evil” Western ideas.

After her country opened up, Michaela Miroiu, a Professor for Political Science today, rose to become one of Romania’s most prominent political theorists and a leading Eastern European philosopher and feminist. An expert advisor to both UNESCO and the European Union today, she co-founded one of earliest women’s rights organisations in Romania, AnA – The Romanian Society for Feminist Analysis.

Being exposed to international scientific societies, Ms Miroiu won both their admiration and their honours: Within years, she received fellowships at both Cornell and Oxford University and became a fellow at the Central European University in Budapest.

Ms. Miroiu is considered as the country’s “conscience” and one of its most brilliant minds. After years and years of defiance as a scientist and thinker under the Soviet rule, her popularity today still feels odd at times. But seeing herself being cheered at, the crowds exclaiming „bravo!” when she is giving one of her thoughtful yet adamantine talks – many of which can be recaptured on Youtube – is only one side of the story.

"We know what we were fighting for", she says. But she wonders whether younger women know their place. "They owe so much to us. But they don't even realise."

In an attempt to establish ties between the early feminists and these younger generations, Ms. Miroiu founded Romania's first gender studies Master's programme in 1998. *"There was no post-feminist movement. Young women today don't care about feminism."* Nevertheless, in 2010, the U.S.-based Association of Women in Slavic Studies awarded her its Outstanding Achievement Award for her accomplishments as a philosopher and her mentorship of a new generation of young Romanian feminists. She feels acknowledged and thankful for all the support she receives, she says. *"But sometimes, it is just too exhausting to be Don Quichotte all the time."*

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