

1 **The ex-communist states of eastern Europe are leaving their pasts**  
2 **behind**

3 *(Original at*  
4 *[http://www.economist.com/world/europe/displayStory.cfm?story\\_id=155](http://www.economist.com/world/europe/displayStory.cfm?story_id=15577511)*  
5 *77511)*

6 For the past 20 years, the ex-communist countries of central and eastern  
7 Europe have been involved in rewriting communist propaganda versions of  
8 history. That has been a thrilling, messy and sometimes disconcerting  
9 process.

10 Recently, Poland protested when Ukraine's outgoing president, Viktor  
11 Yushchenko, made the wartime nationalist leader Stepan Bandera a "Hero  
12 of Ukraine". But that seems to be rather one of the few exceptions to the  
13 general trend: central and eastern Europe may now be joining the club of  
14 the ahistorical and apathetic.

15 In the luckier half of the continent, history has a much shorter half-life.  
16 Who worries about the Schleswig-Holstein question when looking at  
17 Danish-German relations? Who cares that Norway was once part of  
18 Sweden, or that Finland used to be a Grand Duchy of tsarist Russia?

19 The example of Poland is very telling. In recent years it has successfully  
20 pursued reconciliation with Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Germany and  
21 even (albeit in limited terms) with Russia. The recent quarrel with Ukraine  
22 was interesting not because it exemplified the two countries' rows over  
23 history, but because it came after years in which they had sorted out so  
24 much.

## Questions

- 1) Give the gist of the article in your own words (2-3 sentences).
- 2) Throughout the text, there are several words which denote *conflict* or *disharmony* like 'disconcerting'(line 8). Find them.
- 3) Who are the members of the club of the 'ahistorical and apathetic' (14) and why exactly does the article call them *ahistorical* and *apathetic*?
- 4) What does the 'luckier part of the continent' (line 15) refer to?
- 5) 'Half-life' (line 15) is a technical term that is used, amongst others, in physics to describe the time needed for half of the atoms of a radioactive element to disintegrate. What do you think it means in the context of the article?
- 6) Why is the example of Poland telling and what is it telling of? (see vocabulary section for explanation of 'telling')
- 7) 'To exemplify' (line 22) is the verb to an English noun you know all too well. Which one?
- 8) Do you also think that European ex-communist countries are joining the club of the 'ahistorical' and that history is becoming less and less important in their relations?

## Vocabulary

*a telling* (example) (line 19) – revealing; an example that says much about the general trend it demonstrates

*pursue* (line 20) – to follow; engage in; strive to obtain or accomplish

*reconciliation* (line 20) – to win over to friendliness; cause to become amicable

*sort out* (a problem etc.) (line 23) – settle, solve, deal with, etc.

You can find additional explanation and more examples to help you understand and use English words and phrases at <http://dictionary.reference.com>, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>, or <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>

Přejeme Vám mnoho studijních úspěchů.

Tým jazykové skupiny Spěváček:

