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Jens Bastian

Success Is No Guarantee for Greece's Survival

Conditions and Obstacles in the Implementation of the Greek Reform Programme

The Greek sovereign debt crisis is now entering its second year, with no comprehensive solution in sight. The article seeks to take stock of the crisis' evolution, the remedies that have so far been implemented and the further development of crisis resolution mechanisms at work in Athens through the Troika's (EU, ECB, IMF) financial assistance and structural reform programme.

Despite an impressive start of the Papandreou government to confront the crisis' origins and chart a long-term solution of its causes, the efforts continue to be challenged by various constituencies inside Greece and their performance is cast into doubt by foreign observers. While Papandreou's government is trying to implement an unprecedented reform agenda, the economy of Greece is in its third year of recession, with rising unemployment contributing to widespread discontent among citizens. As the debt dynamics continue to force painful adjustments, the discussion about its sustainability is increasingly gaining prominence.

If Greece will have to re-schedule or restructure its debt is discussed in the concluding chapter of the article.

Arndt Künnecke

The Situation of Minorities in Turkey – a Critical Review

The article provides a critical review of the current situation of minorities in Turkey and analyses the background of the political and social exclusion and discrimination of minority groups. The minority rules in the Treaty of Lausanne from 1923 are examined, thus contributing to understand the characteristics and historical roots of the legal status of minorities in Turkey.

The consequences of the specific forms of Turkish nationalism and laicism on the interpretation of the term "minority" are explained. In contrast to the European understanding of minorities which includes religious, ethnic and linguistic groups, the Turkish state only recognizes non-Muslim minorities. In practice – apart from some non-Muslim minorities, such as the Syrian Orthodox Christians – the Turkish state only identifies Greek and Armenian Orthodox Christians and Jews as being "minorities" and grants them a very limited number of rights. As a consequence, members of minority groups in Turkey still face discrimination in many ways even today.

After a phase of encouraging reforms when the AKP came to power in 2002, the status of minorities in Turkey still remains extremely unsatisfactory and there are no signs of significant or sustainable improvements of those rights. The present state of affairs is described in detail in form of specific examples and includes a detailed description of those restricted rights at the end of the article.

Jürgen Henkel

Social Politics in Romania – an Issue Finally Raised?

Notes on the “Social Report“ of Romania’s President Basescu

Social inclusion still is wishful thinking in East and Southeast Europe. Apart from official, but not sufficient basic social protection such as pensions and unemployment benefits the new economic systems of the transforming states cannot be considered as “social market economy” in terms of the German model.

In countries like Romania up to 30 per cent of the population still live below or slightly above the poverty level, important social problems are still unsolved. Among these are the brain drain and the irrational ratio of profits, wages and prices, the high share of pensioners and early pensioners, an ailing and inefficient health system, poverty and prostitution as well as the distressing demographic development. Since 1990 there has been no real social policy existing in Romania. Socially disadvantaged groups have no lobby in politics, media, science and society.

Romania’s President Traian Basescu summoned experts in autumn 2009 to elaborate a “Social Report” that critically analyses the development since 1989. The article presents this Report as one of the most important political documents in post-revolutionary Romania.

Hans Martin Sieg

The Transnistria Conflict: Conditions for Conflict Settlement

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Republic of Moldova gaining independence the Transnistrian region of the country broke away under a separatist regime in Tiraspol from the central government in Chisinau in 1990. Since then two different political systems have emerged in both parts of Moldova with a more authoritarian government in Tiraspol leaning towards Russia and a more democratic system in Chisinau striving for European integration. To reach a settlement of the conflict caused by the secession of Transnistria an international framework of negotiations was established known as the “5+2” format (Chisinau, Tiraspol, Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE as well as the EU and the US as observers). However, until today all proposals for a resolution of the Transnistria conflict failed to find the consent of either Chisinau or Tiraspol. In 2006 formal “5+2 negotiations” ceased to continue.

In their Meseberg Memorandum in June 2010 Chancellor Merkel and President Medvedev agreed to propose a new common effort of Russia and the EU to find a solution for the Transnistria conflict. Thus it has become a potential test case for EU-Russian cooperation and the international framework for a viable settlement of the Transnistria conflict has improved considerably. As one consequence, formal “5+2 negotiations” are likely to be resumed soon. Nevertheless, given the differences

between the political systems on the two banks of the Dniester, the requirements for a successful reunification of the Republic of Moldova have yet to be met on the national level.

<p>Ulf Brunnbauer The Balkan as Trans-Local Space Entanglement, Movement and History</p>

The “Balkans” and “Southeast Europe” have seen a multitude of efforts to come up with unequivocal definitions of what these notions imply. Various aspects of the history of the Balkans were identified as defining markers of a historical region. The article, in contrast, argues that in light of recent methodological changes in historical scholarship, the question of the definition of the region seems to be of secondary importance. Modern history of the Balkans is one of different entanglements, transfers and relations. Historical research thus should reconstruct the relevant spatial dimensions of the relevant matters, and not start by a given spatial – be it national or regional – “container”. The historical actors were integrated in very different networks of interaction and communication. The trans-local nature of Balkan history is exemplified in the article by three biographies from the late 19th/early 20th century. These also reveal the significance of power relations in the shaping of entanglements.