

Abstracts

Meta Novak / Damjan Lajh

Parliamentary Elections in Slovenia – Strategic Vote for Left-wing Politics and against the Right-wing Government

In many ways, the 2022 parliamentary elections in Slovenia were different from previous elections. After three consecutive early elections, the ballot in 2022 was scheduled as planned. During the two-year Janša government from April 2020 to April 2022, protestors gathered every Friday to hold the government accountable. In the months before the elections, the protestors called on citizens to participate in the elections. Consequently, voter turnout was above 70 percent, the highest since 2000. The majority of voters cast a strategic vote. Only five parties entered parliament. Gibanje Svoboda, a newly established party, won a record-breaking 41 seats and formed a coalition with SD and The Left, but also invited two drop-out parties, namely the List of Marjan Šarec (LMŠ) and the Party of Alenka Bratušek (SAB) to join the multi-party coalition. The government of entrepreneur Robert Golob promises to govern in communication with civil society and based on expert judgment. Expectations on the performance of Golob's government are high and it remains to be seen if they will be met.

Jens Bastian

The Sanctions Roulette in Southeast Europe

The complexities of crafting a sanctions regime against Russia and the manner in which countries in the region of Southeast Europe react to them is the subject of this contribution. While the Commission in Brussels expects that countries in the region commit to European foreign policy principles and regulations, individual governments have refused to adhere to such policy guidance. In doing so they are not outliers, neither in Europe nor when compared to numerous other countries in Africa, Asia or Latin America. The following contribution seeks to analyse the challenges of enforcing sanctions in various policy domains. The analysis sheds light on the sobering observation that sanctions-busting or explicit evasion are not necessary to legally continue doing business with Russia among countries in Southeast Europe.

Thomas Brey

Revisionism as a State Goal – The Yugoslav Wars and Russia’s Attack on Ukraine

Even at a superficial glance, it is striking that there are numerous parallels between the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s and the current Russian attack on Ukraine. It is debatable whether lessons can be drawn from history for the present and the future. But identifying patterns in politics and ideology can help us better understand the drivers of nationalism and the revisionism it fuels. Many concrete cases are used to demonstrate how political elites in Serbia and its neighbouring countries instrumentalise history to secure their power. The “correct” ideological-political orientation already begins in history class in schools. The end result for Serbia is an outcome characterised by close ties between the population and Russia and China, although in reality the EU is the all-important foreign policy partner. Still, reality and perception diverge dramatically.

Tatjana Petzer / Christian Voß

Literature as a Soft Power? – Russia’s Discursive Power in Serbia and Montenegro

Russia’s soft power in Southeastern Europe is a highly influential factor that should not be underestimated, especially when it comes to hard interests. Literature has always been an essential part of its soft power, which is not unilaterally motivated, but rather the effect of a mutual communication process. Thus, it does not only influence the public opinion through cultural attractiveness but serves the regime for calibration, legitimisation and controlling the discourses of friendship and enmity.

Using the example of the Western Balkan states of Serbia and Montenegro, which have always shared an affinity for Russia but have also turned towards the EU, we will outline how literature, under politically changed circumstances, on the one hand propagandistically continues its consolidated status as a soft power, and on the other hand shows signs of subversiveness through ignorance. Both can be seen as symptoms of the current crisis of orientation.

Ivana Gordić Perc

The Case of Vietnamese Workers in Linglong – How Human Rights and Freedom of the Press Have Been Systematically Destroyed

The case of 500 Vietnamese workers, the suspected victims of human trafficking in the Linglong factory in Zrenjanin (Serbia), is a consequence of corruption involved at all levels of public administration. Since its beginning, the bilateral contract between Serbia and China has ignored all local, provincial and national laws and procedures. The Chinese investment within the “Belt and Road Initiative” raises urgent questions on human rights, freedom of media and the collusion of criminals with public authorities. The difference to other investments is that this one received full media attention. Even now, nine months later, we still do not know anything about the fate of the workers who were injured or died at the construction site. There are no answers by Serbian institutions to many questions asked by activists and journalists. The Serbian government also remains silent on documents and ap-

peals submitted by the European Parliament, State Department and United Nation's Representatives. It seems that we will never know how many moral, ecological and legal standards were evaded and/or breached at the construction site of the Linglong factory in Zrenjanin.

Bernd Borchardt

Protection for Jews and Persecution of Jews in the Albanian-speaking Area during World War II

During the Holocaust, the Jewish population and about 2,000 Jewish refugees found protection and support in Albania, from the Albanian population and from parts of the Albanian government. Very few Jews became victims of German persecution or the war in Albania. About 450 Jews who lived in the German-occupied Northern Kosovo or had fled there were deported and murdered in 1941/42. The Italian occupiers of Kosovo deported 51 Jewish refugees in early 1942 to the Germans. They also were mostly murdered. After the German occupation in September 1943, German forces arrested – mainly through the Albanian SS “Skanderbeg”-Division – almost 600 Jews and deported them to concentration camps, where many were murdered. Few Jews lived in the Italian-occupied western part of today's Republic of North Macedonia. A substantial number of Jews escaped through the region to Albania, mostly with help from the local population.

Moritz Müller

Perpetuating the Moment – The Ever-present War in Ismet Prcic's “Shards”

Ismet Prcic's “Shards” (Black Cat, Grove Atlantic 2011) reenacts the Bosnian war as a conflicting state in perceiving time: Time seems to be absent or suspended and only therefore, paradoxically, becomes visible. The text uses reiterated and reduplicated sequences to oppose the linear concept of time, to highlight states of in-between: The narrator suffers from dissociation and depicts past, future, and present simultaneously. Based on this observation, the essay analyzes the temporal fragmentary power of war conflicts in a rereading of Paul Virilio's media-philosophical approaches. War as an optical phenomenon and vision machine separates between the perception and the representation of events. The traumatic conflict of the “Shards” protagonists is mirrored in the clash of literary forms: fragmented experience, remembrance and oblivion cover up the border between documentation and narration, memoir and novel.