

Abstracts

George N. Tzogopoulos

Greece's 2023 Elections

This article analyzes political trends and dynamics in Greece by placing emphasis on the general elections of May and June 2023. By using data from several surveys in the 2019–2023 period, it attempts to explain the reasons for the re-election of New Democracy and Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and the simultaneous failure of SYRIZA and its former leader Alexis Tsipras. In so doing, the analysis demonstrates that the majority of Greek citizens decided to renew their trust in the governing party and the prime minister due to their negative memories of the SYRIZA-led administration of the 2015–2019 period. Fear for a return to the policies of those years also played a role. While Greece has taken a clear direction toward the political right and Kyriakos Mitsotakis seems unbeatable, policy challenges ahead in tandem with the potential re-organization of the center-left could have an impact on the political stage in the medium and long term.

Gülistan Gürbey

Turkish Foreign Policy under President Erdoğan – The Tension between Hegemonic Power Aspirations and Geopolitical and Domestic Constraints

Under President Erdoğan, Turkey's regional power radius has expanded considerably. Turkey's influence has visibly grown regionally and internationally. In its foreign and security policy, Erdoğan's Turkey relies on strategic autonomy, a mix of political and military means, including an increased readiness to use military force, and a fluid alliance policy. Relations with Western allies are secondary. The strategic goal is to advance its ideologically shaped great power ambitions as well as its (geo)political, economic and energy policy interests. Conflicts with the West (USA, NATO, EU) are unavoidable due to the country's own strategic goals, hegemonic power projections and positioning in the changing global and regional power order, as well as due to the internal Islamist-ultranationalist government constellation. Relations with the West will therefore remain complicated.

Ahmet Erdi Öztürk

Turkey's Evolving Role in the Balkans – Navigating Complex Relations

Throughout history, Turkey's influence in the Balkans has been substantial, stemming from its Ottoman past. While the Ottoman Empire's legacy is marked by both cooperation and conflict, modern Turkey's diplomatic approach has focused on fostering stability and coop-

eration in the region. Turkey's pursuit of EU membership has played a pivotal role in shaping its Balkan policies, encouraging political and economic reforms in the Balkan states aspiring to EU accession. In recent years, Turkey's increasing engagement with the Balkans has manifested in various forms, including trade partnerships, infrastructure development, and cultural exchanges including the role of Sunni Islam under the umbrella of state craft. However, this engagement has not been without challenges, as regional complexities, historical tensions, and geopolitical rivalries continue to influence the dynamics between Turkey and the Balkan states. Therefore, this study aims to highlight the growing importance of Turkey's role in the Balkans, not only as a regional actor but also as a bridge between Europe and the Middle East.

Adamantios Theodor Skordos

The Greek-Turkish Population Exchange 1922/1923 – Conflicted Memories and Global Legacies

The collective memory of the “Asia Minor Catastrophe” is omnipresent in modern Greece. The term refers to the expulsion of the Greek Orthodox population from Asia Minor in September 1922 as result of the lost war against Turkey (1919–1922). This violent displacement was made subsequently legal by the Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations, signed at Lausanne 30 January 1923, as part of the Lausanne Peace Treaty. In Turkey's official culture of remembrance and politics of history, the exodus of over a million Orthodox Christians from Asia Minor and the following Lausanne Convention is overshadowed by the “liberation of Izmir” by Kemal Atatürk. Although the Treaty of Lausanne was not the first interstate population exchange agreement in modern history, its impact at the global level was unprecedented. In the decades that followed, up to the end of the Cold War, the alleged “success story” of the Greek-Turkish population exchange was repeatedly invoked to justify and enforce large-scale population resettlements for the purpose of national homogenization projects.

Hans-Christian Maner

Mysteries, Light, Region – European Capitals of Culture 2023 in Southeastern Europe. Concepts, Historical Premises, Objectives

Mysteries, light, region stand for central catchwords in the presentations of the three European Capitals of Culture, all located in Southeastern Europe in 2023: Mysteries in the case of Elefsina in Greece, Light as part of the motto for Timișoara (Romania). The region is a focal point in the program of Veszprém (Hungary). This contribution will focus on the three cities and ask: What historical references are mentioned, what events, dates, people are brought to the fore? Some basic considerations will be made, revolving around the concept of the European Capital of Culture, its historical premises and objectives. Related to this are questions about the respective city's biography or self-staging, about the collective self-perception, about the discourses about the three Capitals of Culture. And finally: To what extent can the respective Capital of Culture project promote and strengthen a European consciousness?

Philine Bickhardt

On Serbian Victims and Croatian Perpetrators – The Former Concentration Camp “Staro Sajmište” as a Venue for Nationalist Discourses

The former concentration camp “Staro Sajmište” (1941–1943) in the center of Belgrade is currently becoming a venue for Serbian nationalist interpretations of history. These actions not only marginalize other victim groups but also mythologize the Serbs as the blameless victims of the “fascist Croats” during World War II. This article deals with the Serbian Government ignoring scientific research (a), the importance of naming all groups of victims (b), and strategies of Serbian authorities of “framing” this German concentration camp as a Croatian one, with the purpose of creating an interpretation of history in which Serbs per se are considered victims and Croats per se perpetrators (c). Despite the large number of critical discussions in the media over the past months, demolition work continues at the historical site.

Christian Voß

“Patriarchy Kills” – Recent Feminist Writing from the Western Balkans in Translation

The article presents new books written by Lana Bastašić (Bosnia and Hercegovina), Lindita Arapi (Albania) and Rumena Bužarovska (North Macedonia). Two of them are transnational authors who have left the Balkans. All three authors describe domestic violence, sexual abuse and oppression in different regional contexts. Only Bastašić writes about ethnic conflicts during the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, whereas the Albanian case seems conditioned by totalitarian spying and the social pressure of extended families.

How do the authors position themselves in the asymmetrical and hierarchical relationship between the Balkans and the West? Despite their realistic descriptions of the Balkan patriarchy, they are aware of existing mutual hetero stereotyping and actively decide against a one-sided position. Especially Bužarovska’s and Arapi’s books avoid being labeled as supporters of Balkan-related orientalism. At the same time they oppose occidentalist and anti-Western currents in the Western Balkans.