Abstracts

Hans-Christian Maner

Presidential Elections in Romania – Under the Sign of Sovereignism and the Longing for the "Strong Leader"?

The incidents surrounding presidential elections and presidential durations are unique in Romania's post-1990 history. The parliamentary and especially the presidential elections in November 2024 revealed what Western media in particular had been unwilling to acknowledge for several years, namely that Romania has not only an open, pro-European face, but also a sovereigntist and traditionalist one. At the same time, the elections also revealed the often uncritical, instrumentalized, and distorted use of Romania's own history and, not least, the all too hesitant or even absent reappraisal of its dark chapters.

Dietmar Müller

Militant Democracy in Romania and Moldova

Over the past two years, in the context of referendums and elections ranging from local to presidential in Romania and Moldova, courts and other state institutions have applied various measures of militant democracy. These range from banning political parties from elections through barring individual politicians from candidacy, and finally, to cancelling election results. This article maps these instruments of a militant democracy and discusses their rationale, considering legal and political opportunities and challenges. Against the background of Russia's neo-imperial policies, the article focuses on alleged foreign agent interferences in Moldova's and Romania's democratic processes and analyzes militant democracy historically as a travelling concept and as a transnational current phenomenon.

Iulian Stănescu

The Romanian Presidential Election – National Discontent Despite Personal Income Satisfaction?

The 2024 Romanian presidential election will be remembered as a two-act upset. First, the candidates of the two mainstream parties, which had always made it to the second round, failed to do so. Secondly, the election was controversially cancelled. This paper aims to explain this surprising election result by looking at the direction of the country polling indicator. In particular, it examines why two-thirds of voters said the country was on the wrong track despite two-thirds of voters being content with their personal income. On a wider scale, social pessimism and the election result also seem to contradict the prevailing narrative about Romania as an EU accession success story in economic terms. This article em-

ploys long-term official statistics and survey data from the election campaign, for the latter both qualitative and quantitative. The main findings point to the economy and politics as the main sources of voter dissatisfaction with the country's direction. Moreover, voters seem to make a distinction in the evaluations between their personal economic situation and the systemic functioning of the country's economy and political system.

Ognian Hishow

The Euro in Southeast Europe – Economic Booster or Brake?

The Economic and Monetary Union (EMU; euro area; eurozone) stands out among various attempts to create lasting currency unions globally. While other similar undertakings might not survive when faced with major shocks, the EMU has mustered the political will to overcome severe financial and monetary crises, sometimes at high sociopolitical costs. This is closely observed in Southeast Europe and there is a perception that the common currency is bringing about benefits. The euro bears the promise to bring the participating economies together by lifting productivity and living standards. The incentives to join often derive from onesided benefit expectations such as access to the resources of economically potent partners (e.g. Germany), together with a perception of security and stability. Less attention is paid to the fact that membership in a currency union like the EMU does come with costs, which economists have frequently warned about.

Krsto Lazarević

The Other Serbia 2.0 – The Uprising Against Corruption and Autocracy

Serbia is witnessing its largest protests since Slobodan Milošević's fall, triggered by the deadly collapse of the newly renovated train station in Novi Sad. The protests, led by students and supported by farmers, workers, taxi drivers, pensioners, and civil society at large, denounce systemic corruption, violence, and authoritarianism under President Aleksandar Vučić. While rooted in Serbia's long tradition of democratic resistance, the movement distinguishes itself through innovative protest forms, creative communication, and a radical commitment to grassroots democracy that deliberately avoids central leadership, thus making it harder to co-opt or suppress. Despite repression and propaganda, the protests have evolved into a nationwide call for justice, institutional accountability, and a return to constitutional rule.

Stiven Tremaria

Dayton at 30 – Policing, Politics, and Statebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina

This article analyzes the intertwining of political developments, the process of statebuilding, and the transformations in police agencies – their powers and policing practices – in a 30-year assessment of the Dayton order in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It argues that a dialectical and interdependent relationship exists between political dynamics, state functioning, and policing. This is evidenced over the last decade and a half by mounting state dysfunc-

tionality and autocratization of ethno-nationalist politics, coupled with the stagnation of state-level police reform and rollback of the democratic police model in the entities and cantons through the politicization and militarization of police agencies.

Alexander Rhotert

The Background of the Fall of the UN "Safe Areas" Srebrenica and Žepa and the Subsequent Genocide

The focus of this article is on the two eastern Bosnian enclaves, Srebrenica and Žepa, which were declared "safe areas" by the Security Council of the United Nations in 1993. Along with Goražde, they were the only Bosniak enclaves that resisted the Serbian "Blitzkrieg" in eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina in the spring of 1992. The Serbian troops under the command of Bosnian-Serb army commander General Ratko Mladić had intended to capture Srebrenica as early as March 1993, but were prevented from doing so by the commander of the UN Protection Force, General Philippe Morillon. The article analyzes the UN Security Council's actions and the attempts made to implement the concept of UN safe areas. The fateful role of top military and civilian UN representatives in the former Yugoslavia, General Bernard Janvier and Yasushi Akashi, respectively, is also addressed, as well as the roles of NATO and the Serbian government under President Slobodan Milošević.

Antonija Cvitić

The Bocanje Tattoo Practice – Memory Inscribed in Human Skin

This paper explores the tattooing practice known as Bocanje or Sicanje, a form of body modification historically practiced among Catholic women in western Bosnia and Herzegovina. Drawing on personal experiences, anthropological sources, and historical texts, it examines Bocanje not as a static tradition but as a complex and dynamic cultural practice embedded in shifting interpretations of identity, religion, gender, and memory. The article criticizes ethnographic representations that often marginalize tattooed individuals. By engaging with concepts of performativity and memory, the paper demonstrates how Bocanje functions as a bodily archive and collective marker shaped by oral histories and contemporary narratives in a post-conflict, multiethnic context. The paper advocates for a more reflexive and situated approach to studying such embodied cultural practices, one that acknowledges the entanglement of present perspectives with historical interpretation while placing the agency of tattooed individuals at the centre.

Jutta Lauth Bacas

"Turkish Tourists Everywhere in Mytilene" – The Impact of the Express Visa on Tourism in the Greek Aegean

This article focuses on the Greek-Turkish border region in the Aegean Sea, which is characterized by tensions and ambivalences: while a sea border separates Europe from Asia Minor and, at the same time, the EU from Turkey, the Greek border islands lie within sight of the Anatolian coast and can be reached from Turkey by boat within one to two hours. Fol-

lowing the introduction of an online e-visa for Turkish citizens visiting Greek border islands in April 2024, an unexpected surge of Turkish visitor groups began arriving at Greek border islands such as Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Rhodes, or Kos in the following months. This shift in the Greek visa regime for Turkish citizens – approved by the EU – is relevant not only for the border islands but for Greek-Turkish relations more broadly. This article analyzes the social, economic, and cultural impact of this new visa regulation on Turkish-Greek tourism and local island communities, with special focus on the Greek island of Lesbos.