

Abstracts

Oliver Jens Schmitt

Euro-Orthodoxy: A Concept and its Political Dimension

Three EU Member States are predominantly Orthodox countries: Greece, Bulgaria, and Romania. There are also EU candidate countries, already in concrete negotiations, with predominantly Orthodox societies, ranging from Montenegro to Serbia, North Macedonia, Moldova, and Ukraine. As such, the EU is poised to become more Orthodox and could soon form the second-largest Orthodox bloc in the world, after Russia. However, there is little systematic reflection on this within the EU, despite the fact that Moscow uses Orthodoxy as an ideological tool to underline its hegemonic position in the Orthodox world and to weaken Orthodox EU states and candidate countries from within. Is there an EU Orthodoxy that opposes Moscow's claims to hegemony? What does it mean to speak of an "EU Orthodoxy"? And what is the political and intellectual landscape of the Orthodox worlds within the EU?

Momchil Metodiev

State and Church in Bulgaria at the Beginning of the Cold War (1944 – 1961)

Paradoxically, after a long period of schism from the Orthodox family, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church's international status was restored and elevated during the years of Stalinism with the support of the newly established communist regime in Bulgaria. The first patriarch of the modern Bulgarian Patriarchate was elected on 10 May 1953, though his title was recognized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate as late as 1961. Does this mean that the Bulgarian Church was tolerated by the communist regime? How can this support from the secular authorities be explained within the wider context of inter-Orthodox relations at the beginning of the Cold War? This article answers these questions based on newly accessible official state archives, archives of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, recently declassified archives of the communist State Security, and other scholarly research. It argues that the election of the patriarch and the elevation of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church were part of a broader process of communist authorities establishing control over the Church.

Cristian Vasile

The Romanian Orthodox Church During the Cold War

This article provides a two-fold analysis: first, it examines the constitutional and legal provisions regarding the relationship between the Romanian state and the Orthodox Church;

secondly, it assesses the degree of separation between the two entities during various phases of the communist era. The article briefly compares the situation of the Romanian Orthodox Church under the Soviet-type regime with that of other Orthodox Churches, mainly in Southeast Europe, under communist rule. The article's hypothesis is that the Greek Catholic factor distinguished Church-State relations in Romania. Furthermore, the Romanian case seems to stand out both due to the increased infiltration of the priestly and monastic communities by political police informants (the Securitate) and due to the intensive use of Orthodox hierarchs to promote state-sponsored cultural nationalism (the so-called Romanian Protochronism). Finally, starting from the nationalist involvement of the Orthodox clergy under the Ceaușescu regime, the article also examines several elements of continuity into the post-communist era.

Ioannis Zelepos

Greek “Neo-Orthodoxy” in the Cold War Period and its Ideological Impacts: Between “Helleno-Christianity” and “Christiano-Marxism”

The article examines Greek “Neo-Orthodoxy” during the Cold War as an intellectual current that developed in opposition to the close alliance of Church, State, and anti-communist nationalism in post-war Greece. It entered into a dialogue with a social-revolutionary theory that was called “Christiano-Marxism” and gained considerable influence on Greek public discourse in the period following the fall of the military dictatorship in 1974. The mechanisms of approach between neo-orthodox and left-wing intellectuals are examined by biographical sketches of the most prominent representatives and with reference to ideological affinities, namely, anti-Western critique and ethnocentrism. The article, thereupon, gives an outlook on the long-lasting impacts of Neo-Orthodox currents on the official Church from the 1980s until today.

Jelena Džankić

Montenegro's EU Accession: Proof-of-Concept or a Sorting Mechanism?

The European Commission's June 2026 financial package of 3.2 billion euros for Montenegro, designed to ensure the country's participation in EU policies and budget, has bolstered this Western Balkan country's status as the “frontrunner” among the candidates for EU accession. What are the implications of Montenegro's potential EU accession for the rest of the region? In the main, Montenegro's accession would boost the EU's credibility proving that reform is still rewarded with membership, but the prospect of a “two-tier” membership model risks offsetting that promise for other candidates. Regionally, the impact will be uneven. Albania might benefit the most, while Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and North Macedonia are likely to gain little, due to structural and bilateral issues. Serbia's stalled accession and backsliding may deepen the country's isolation and drift toward Russia. Finally, Montenegro's accession would recalibrate geopolitical competition, curbing Chinese and Russian leverage in the country, while potentially concentrating it elsewhere in the region.

Daniela Simon / Danica Trifunjagić

Between the National Flag and the Feminist Banner: Female Agency in Student Protests in Serbia

The student protests that emerged in Serbia after the collapse of the Novi Sad railway station canopy in November 2024 have become one of the largest civic mobilizations in the country's recent history. Women have played a particularly visible role as students, activists, mothers, and relatives of victims, shaping the movement's public image and moral authority. This essay explores how feminist claims, maternal identities, national symbols, and demands for political accountability coexist within the protests. It argues that these different forms of female agency are not necessarily contradictory but together contribute to the movement's broad social appeal and political legitimacy.

Thomas Brey

Between Glorification and Demonisation: The Image of Germany in Serbia

Germany's image in Serbia has shifted in recent years from being extremely positive to very negative. The reason for this is the centralised and controlled media landscape, which is being used by the all-powerful President Aleksandar Vučić to maintain his system of power. Through disinformation, the media intend to "prove" that Serbia plays an international role that far exceeds its actual significance. At the same time, a cult of personality is being fuelled, portraying the President's role in both domestic and foreign policy as unique and therefore indispensable. The media promote their country's neutral stance towards the West, Russia, and China, even though Serbia is clearly oriented towards the EU – and, above all, Germany – in economic and cultural terms.

Stephan Müller

Roma and the New Era for Hungary

The new era for Hungary as envisaged by the new Government would also require the implementation of a different policy for its Roma citizens who are estimated to number up to 900,000 people. This would include that antigypsyism be addressed and that the deep divide between Roma and ethnic Hungarians be overcome. On a symbolic level, Péter Magyar and TISZA have sent out the first important signals that Roma are an integral and important part of Hungary. However, there is also criticism that no representative of the minority has been entrusted with responsibility in the government. Péter Magyar and TISZA emphasise that they would not pursue "specific policies for Roma". They argued that there are no issues that specifically affect only Roma; rather, the needs of Roma should be taken into account in all relevant policy areas. Whilst this approach has its merits, it carries significant risks if it reduces the situation of the Roma to a "social issue" and overlooks the need to fight racism, as the chapter on "Equal Opportunities for Roma" in the TISZA party manifesto demonstrates, which makes no mention of the need to combat antigypsyism.