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Franz-Lothar Altmann

Energy Supply Determining the Future of (Southeast) Europe

Since 2002, the EU is trying to find access to the energy resources in the Caspian region, in Central Asia and in the Middle East in order to diversify its supply with primary energy. Southeast Europe was hereby identified as an important transit region and transit hub. It turned out that far-reaching unity of interests with regard to securing future energy supplies exists between the EU and the Southeast European countries. As for the latter the prospect of EU's financial engagement plays an important role.

The "Treaty Establishing the Energy Community" (signed in Athens on 25 October 2005) has two goals: to establish a common integrated electricity, and to prepare Southeast Europe for its projected role as a transit region for the diversified energy supply for Central and Western Europe, but also for Southeast Europe itself, by building up a transportation and distribution network for natural gas from the Caspian region and Central Asia.

Russia is not at all excited to notice that a realisation of the projects will jeopardise its own attempts to gain a quasi-monopoly position as regards the energy supply of the EU and also of Southeast Europe. Gazprom has evidenced distinct attempts not only to strengthen its position in the EU's gas imports but also to get hold of the domestic distribution networks in Southeast Europe, i.e. in Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece in particular, but at the same time also in England, Germany, and Italy.

Oliver Schwarz

The Struggle between Greece and Macedonia about the Settlement of the Name Dispute

Bargaining in the Shadow of the Bucharest NATO-Summit

Politicians are sure enough: Europeanization promotes stabilization and conflict settlement. Although the Interim Accord of 1995 between Greece and Macedonia has enabled Macedonia's integration process into the Euro-Atlantic community, the name dispute between both countries has not been settled so far. Furthermore, Greece's decision to veto Macedonia's NATO accession at the Bucharest summit in April 2008 has brought this process of Europeanization to a provisional end.

What does this mean for the final solution of the name issue? Is a conflict settlement still possible?

The analytical toolkit of the "Hexagon of Conflict Settlement" provides useful answers to these questions and points out the factors that play an obstructive or facilitating

role in the process of conflict settlement. As a result of the analysis a mutually acceptable solution on the name issue still seems to be a realistic option. However, the risk of conflict escalation is obvious.

Christiane Schlötzer-Scotland

Haunted by Nationalism: The New Turkish Identity Crisis

Turkey is again in turmoil. AKP, the party of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, which is governing with an absolute majority and has succeeded to secure the opening of membership talks with the European Union, has to face closure by the Constitutional Court under the suspicion of being in favour of sharia, the islamic law. The court case is part of a mayor power struggle, which the strictly secular opposition party CHP and their followers in the state bureaucracy and the military hope to win. The case has driven Turkey into a bitter division; it has brought old identity questions again to the top of the agenda, questions about the place of religion in society especially. Parts of the opposition are fueling nationalism to strengthen their position and are pleading for more distance from Europe. The situation has already led to a decline in foreign investments in Turkey, which had only recently lived through a period of high growth and economic liberalization. The EU has expressed concern about the future of democracy in the country that is in a pivotal strategic position for Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia.

Stefanie Bolzen

“Generation €”: How “European” is Youth in Southeast Europe? A Study of Generations in Romania, Slovakia and Kosovo

Vaslui, Eastern Romania, on an early spring day: “Do you feel European?”, I ask Simona Epure, a 21-year-old Romanian woman. “European? Never!”, she answers promptly and looks at me with a doubtful expression. “I am a woman and I don’t have a job. For both reasons I feel discriminated. If Romania was really a part of Europe, there would not be discrimination.”

Simona is a representative of the young generation that has lived the transformations after 1989, the transformations in a region that strives to become full part of the European Union.

Yet this generation of the 19 to 26 years old is different to their contemporaries in the “old” EU-member states. By focussing this age group in three different countries on three levels of EU integration – Slovakia, Romania, Kosovo – it becomes clear that they do bring a new mind set into the Union: Their approach to the EU is much more pragmatic and individualistic than Brussels founding fathers would possibly have liked to see. They regard EU-membership as a mere tool for their personal objectives. This generation does not have trust in politics and is hardly willing to contribute to the well-being of the community.

The young Slovaks, Romanians and Kosovars interviewed have internalized what it means to live in a globalised world with less and less theoretic borders and growing challenges for the individual. Therefore the author names this generation a “Generation €”.

Georg Paul Hefty

Parliamentarism in Hungary: From Show-Parliament to Working-Parliament

Neither collective forces nor common trends had turned the communist show-parliament in Hungary into a democratic working-parliament, but single daring deputies like Zoltán Király.

At the beginning of the 1990s the reformed Hungarian parliament understood its duties literally enough to work out the laws in the plenary meetings. During the first democratic year the parliament conferred permanently. Besides, there were plebiscites, which turned out for the benefit of the opposition.

Both of the leading parliamentary groups today – the Socialist and the bourgeois FIDESZ – have been similarly strong for a long time, but for ten years they have been depending on a smaller partner to form a government. A high voters' turnout usually brings a victory to the left side; a low voters' turnout helps the central-right to form the government. At this time the deeply dissented parliament exercises mutual blockade of majority and minority.

Eve-Marie Kallen

“I have a Hungarian and a Serbian Side” – Interview with László Végel

In the interview, László Végel speaks about his existence as a Hungarian native speaker and well-known writer who lives in a non-Hungarian environment, in the Serbian province of Vojvodina. This is a very complicated situation: One of the complications lies within the fact that Serbia – and Végel's home town Novi Sad – finds itself in a process of growing aggression and intolerance after a period of more than twenty years in which the different ethnicities that live in Northern Serbia had a rather peaceful time of cohabitation (Tito's time).

Végel is a specially qualified person to talk about the "ins" and "outs" of a writer and an intellectual in a cultural-political "biotope", because he is more than "just" an artist (with a Hungarian background), he is an artist as well as a social scientist.

As László Végel had lived for about a year with a DAAD-scholarship in Berlin, his first book in German translation has now been published: "Exterritorium" (2007).