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Russia, Kosovo and Europe

Rastislav Báčora

Organisierte Kriminalität
auf dem westlichen Balkan
Schwerpunkt Kosovo

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Sehr geehrte Leserin, sehr geehrter Leser,

Am 17. Februar 2008 erklärte das Parlament in Pristina die Unabhängigkeit des Kosovo. Obwohl die Kosovaren die Wahl dieses Datums mit führenden westlichen Staaten koordiniert hatten, konnte sich der EU-Ministerrat in seiner Brüsseler Sitzung am 18. Februar trotz intensiver Bemühungen der Befürworter auf keine gemeinsame Anerkennungslinie der EU einigen. Entsprechend vage und unverbindlich blieb die gemeinsame Erklärung zu diesem historischen Ereignis. Immerhin konnte bereits zwei Tage zuvor „EULEX Kosovo“, die wichtigste Säule des umfassenden künftigen EU-Engagements in der Region, auf den Weg gebracht werden. Die EU wird sich an der Stabilisierung und am Aufbau des Kosovo in einem bislang beispiellosen Umfang engagieren. Über die Ziele und einzelnen Elemente dieses Einsatzes informiert unsere Rubrik „Dokumentation“.

Die Skeptiker unter den EU-Staaten gegen eine Unabhängigkeit des Kosovo führen vor allem völkerrechtliche Bedenken ins Feld. Dabei fürchten sie insbesondere die Präzedenz-Wirkung einer Anerkennung – meist mit Blick auf die potenziellen Ansprüche von Minderheiten im eigenen Land. „Speerspitze“ der Ablehnungsfront gegenüber der Sezession der Kosovaren ist Russland. Ein wesentlicher Beweggrund Moskaus, so die Analyse des früheren Hohen Repräsentanten in Bosnien und Herzegowina, Wolfgang Petritsch, ist eine neue, zielstrebige und selbstbewusste Verfolgung politischer, wirtschaftlicher und strategischer Interessen Russlands auf dem Balkan. Der Schulterchluss Moskaus in der Kosovo-Frage mit den Konservativen und Nationalisten in Belgrad ebnet den Russen nicht zuletzt den Weg für strategische Investitionen in den serbischen Energiesektor. Sie sind, so der Autor, Teil eines neuen *American Way* bei der Wahrnehmung von Geschäftsinteressen, den jüngst Russland auch beim Abschluss von Kontrakten zu Gas-Pipeline-Projekten in anderen südosteuropäischen Staaten verfolgt.

Die internationale Gemeinschaft sieht sich im Kosovo mit vielen Aspekten eines „schwachen Staates“ konfrontiert. Ein wichtiger Aspekt ist hierbei der hohe Stellenwert der Organisierten Kriminalität (OK), der – so der Autor Rastislav Báčora – auch eine direkte Bedrohung für die politische Sicherheit der EU insgesamt darstellt. Der Politikwissenschaftler beleuchtet anhand vielfältiger Quellen die Entstehung und den Stellenwert der OK auf dem Balkan und ihre spezifisch kosovarische Ausprägung. Die beste Methode zur Bekämpfung der OK im Kosovo sei eine Verbesserung der Lebensverhältnisse der breiten Masse, so der Lichtblick am Ende einer insgesamt eher bedrückenden Analyse.

Wir wünschen Ihnen eine anregende und aufschlussreiche Lektüre – natürlich auch bei den weiteren interessanten Beiträgen außerhalb unseres Kosovo-Schwerpunkts.

Ihre Redaktion

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Wolfgang Petritsch

Russia, Kosovo and Europe – A Case Study in Post-Cold War Conflict Management

Russia's current involvement in Kosovo and its stern opposition to the independence of the province must increasingly be seen as part of the new race for political influence in Southeast Europe. After more than a decade in which Russia's role in this region oscillated between non-engagement, Slavic-Orthodox solidarity and cooperation with the West, Russia now takes a new, more assertive stand with clearly defined economic, political and strategic goals.

As far as the European Union is concerned it is important to comprehend that Russia's insistence on Belgrade's prior consent to any change of the status of Kosovo is not just an expression of the traditional relationship between Russia and Serbia. It also plays into Russia's rather recent economic engagement in Serbia whose energy sector has come out as a strategic target.

The European Union will undoubtedly succeed in this new competitive environment as it can offer Serbia integration into its sphere. Its policies, if applied consistently, could bring an improvement of the current social and economic situation and offer a promise for a better future, thereby ushering in peace, stability, and increased prosperity to the entire war-torn region. Conversely, Moscow's return to the Balkans is both a challenge and an opportunity for a more meaningful cooperation between the EU, Russia and Southeast Europe.

Rastislav Báchora

Organized Crime in West Balkans Challenging Political Safety in the EU – Main Focus Kosovo

Organized Crime (OC) in the Balkans is an important challenge for the political security in the EU. Special emphasis lies on the OC-rate in the states of the former Yugoslavia and those in Kosovo. These states have in common that there are groups whose importance is related to the wartime in the 1990s. During the war OC actually was the main source of financing. Especially drug trafficking played an important role. After the war criminal networks could establish in society, economy and politics and further exert their illegal activities pursued during the war.

In this context Kosovo has a remarkable position. On the one hand the entire political elite emanated from former war protagonists, on the other hand Kosovo is the most important destination concerning transit and depositing of heroine. Furthermore

Albanian OC-groups, above all from Kosovo, are being classified as an increasing menace for the EU-states by EUROPOL.

Harald Schenker

Promoting Minority Rights and Local Democracy – an Intervention

The intricate relationship between majority populations and national and ethnic minorities in Southeast Europe have undergone major changes during the last two decades, marked by international efforts to set clearer standards for the complex of minority rights, protection and participation.

Progress in inter-ethnic relations is a precondition for access to the EU today.

Disparities however persist between national legislation regarding this issue and its implementation, especially on local level. The fast pace of decentralisation is opening a gap determined by lack of will, funding and capacity on the level of municipalities.

Modernisation of local administrations is, however, imminent and unavoidable.

In order to support this process concerning the specific area of minority issues, the German Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation has designed and started implementing an approach based on local organisations, by which local population, civil society and administrations will increase their cooperation in an approach in partnership. This would ultimately lead to a more transparent and accountable policy regarding minority rights by local administrations, as well as to a general increase of level and quality of local democracy. The project also intends to work towards a coherent regional policy regarding minority issues and the local level.

Christian Voss

United in Diversity? – A Comparison of Cultural Policy in Tito's Yugoslavia and the European Union

Tito's Yugoslavia considered itself as an attempt to heal the wounds of Belgrade's unitarist centralism in the interwar period and sought to realise the equality of all Yugoslav peoples under the banner of *bratstvo i jedinstvo* ("Brotherhood and Unity"). In the 1960s, Tito's nationalities policy changed and the state leadership began to promote an ever-increasing federalisation, expounding the development of separate, nationally defined cultural blocks within a Yugoslav society. Decentralisation and the shift of power to the republics were both intended to ease tension; in the long term they called forth the opposite.

The paper discusses the comparability of Tito's Yugoslavia with the European Union's cultural policy. Minority protection as well as the Greenpeace-like ethical pathos of "salvage linguistics" lead to the ethnicization of society along the contours of cultural identities and tend to create territorialized ethnic identities.

Similarities in the Yugoslav and the European Union's handling of cultural and linguistic differences can be reduced to the persisting Herderian concept of language equating ethnic and language group membership.

Paskal Milo

Twenty Years of Diplomatic Relations between Albania and Germany (1987-2007)

In September 1987 Germany and Albania established diplomatic relations. This historic step was preceded by several attempts of rapprochement and negotiations between the two countries. Any of these attempts failed, as Albania claimed reparation payments from Germany for damages sustained during the 2nd World War occupation. These demands were repeatedly rejected by German governments who instead offered monetary assistance for the languishing Albanian economy. The author gives a vivid account of the ups and downs in political efforts to forge diplomatic ties between the two unequal countries.

The forcible entry of several thousands of Albanian citizens into the German Embassy in Tirana in July 1990 marked the breakdown of the communist regime in Tirana. Since the democratic changes in Albania, Germany has constantly shown a friendly and supportive attitude towards the Balkan country assisting on its path towards Euro-Atlantic integration. And, despite the negative image many Germans do have from the country, Albania and its people have always struggled to be part of European integration.

Andreas Theophanous / Yiannis Tirkides / Theodoros Pelagidis

Cyprus' Accession to the Eurozone and the Reunification of the Island's Economy

The paper addresses issues pertaining to the accession of Cyprus to the Eurozone and the reunification of the economy of the island-state. Within this framework the performance of the economy of Cyprus, both in the southern part ("government-controlled areas") and in the northern part, are examined.

The authors also examine the conditions for a successful participation in the Eurozone following the introduction of the Euro in January 2008, and evaluate the progress toward real convergence. Particular attention is given to the German experience of reunification, with a view to drawing relevant and useful lessons for Cyprus, as well as to issues of political economy concerning the accession to the Eurozone and the challenge of reunification. The last section summarizes the main points, makes policy recommendations and suggestions for further research.