

Abstracts

Gregor Mayer

Sovereignism as a Pretence – Viktor Orbán's Struggle with the European Project

Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orbán nearly ship-wrecked the EU's summit in December 2020. A new state-of-law mechanism, to be introduced in early 2021, had triggered a veto threat by Hungary and Poland, the two most "illiberal" members of the EU. The right-wing populist governments in Budapest and Warsaw framed the state-of-law mechanism as an infringement of their national sovereignty. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, as the leader of the member-state presiding over the rotating European Council at the time, succeeded to forge a difficult compromise with Orbán.

This contribution examines the sovereignty concept brought up in the argumentation and discourses of the Orbán government. It turns out that Orbán and his strategists heavily rely on the theoretical concepts of the controversial German legal philosopher Carl Schmitt. It seems that the autocratic rule of the Orbán government, rhetorically justified by a Schmittian sovereignty claim, only serves one purpose: to rob the country and to enrich his family and a small number of crony capitalists, created by him and dependent on him.

Adelheid Wölfl

Migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina in a Legal No-man's Land and in Humanitarian misery

Since 2017 more and more migrants and refugees arrived in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is a consequence of tightened border controls and the fence between Serbia and Hungary. These migrants are predominantly single young men from Afghanistan and Pakistan who are trying to enter Croatia via the Bosnian canton Una-Sana. In Bosnia and Herzegovina there are not enough reception centres for the thousands of homeless people. Local politicians are increasingly opposing attempts by the central government to build new centres or reopen existing ones. In addition to the humanitarian crisis winter conditions endanger the health and lives of these migrants. Obviously, Bosnia and Herzegovina is not in a position to carry out legal proceedings to clarify the legal status of these people. There is also a lack of cooperation with EU states from which migrants traveled to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Gudrun Steinacker

Montenegro after the Parliamentary Elections on 30 August 2020

A three-party coalition won a narrow majority by one seat. These highly heterogeneous groups are struggling to find common ground. On 8 September 2020 they signed a commitment to Montenegro's NATO membership and future EU membership, a precondition for support from the US and EU, respectively. They seem determined to bring the corrupt, clientelistic regime of DPS under President Milo Đukanović, his family and his cronies to an end. In order to understand the present situation, it is necessary to take a look back to the development of Montenegro since the collapse of Yugoslavia in 1991 and the development of Đukanović from a fanatic supporter of Milosević to his fierce critic and supporter of Montenegro's independence in 2006, while enriching himself and his friends via links with organized crime. Highly indebted, severely affected by the pandemic which halted tourism as main source of revenue, Montenegro is facing a most difficult economic and social situation with little hope for a fast recovery. The new government thus has to make the impossible possible if it wants to survive.

Dragan Šljivić

Montenegro's Canonical Orthodox Church and Transition to Democracy in the Aftermath of the 2020 Parliamentary Elections

The most recent parliamentary elections in Montenegro can be regarded as a major threshold in the history of this country, as they might set in motion a transition from the competitive authoritarianism of Milo Đukanović towards a genuine democracy. One actor in this process deserves closer scrutiny—the Serbian Orthodox Church. Its active role in undermining the legitimacy of the authoritarian regime stands in sharp contrast to the general perception of the Orthodox Church, namely of being a bystander during such a transition. This unexpected behavior could be explained by drawing on specific Montenegrin identity issues, conflict over property rights and the accumulation of non-religiously motivated dissent over the past years. After the elections, several potential trajectories in the church-state relationship in Montenegro may become available.

Thomas Brey

Misuse of History – How Politics in Southeastern Europe Revises the Past and Instrumentalizes it for Nationalism and Populism

In the successor states of Yugoslavia, political elites continue to use the revision of history to justify their own system of rule more than 20 years after the wars. They revise history, claiming a historical victim status for their people and a perpetrator role for all other nations. The goal is to homogenize their own people and exclude any dissenting opinion. Possible aggression is thus whitewashed as self-defense.

This instrument of securing power falls on fertile ground even among young people who have not themselves experienced the wars of the 1990s. History and politics lessons in

schools as well as the media reinforce these narratives and lead to the stigmatization of allegedly hostile neighbors. Social media in particular support the spread of the most un-historical and even freely invented interpretations of the past.