

Abstracts

Christian Hagemann

Moldova's Parliamentary Elections – A Realistic Chance for Fundamental Reforms?

Moldova's parliamentary election on 11 July 2021 resulted in a landslide victory for the Party of Action and Solidarity (PAS) that was founded by now President Maia Sandu. The election was the final breakthrough for Moldova's reform actors who now control the presidency, the executive branch, and parliament. The article presents the election results and then explains the political circumstance in order to understand what happened in Moldova. It then goes on to discuss whether or not the promises of fundamental reform are likely to be fulfilled. For this, it considers PAS' and Sandu's track-record, the hurdles they had to overcome so far, compares these to past "reformist" actors, and finally outlines obstacles which might impede even well-intentioned measures of reform. It seems that despite all uncertainties that persist, the new government might be the best chance the country has ever had to turn things for the better in its three decades of independence.

Niko Korpar

Slovenia 30 Years after Independence – Economic Development and Prospects

The COVID-19 pandemic initially hit Slovenia's economy hard, lowering GDP in 2020 by 5.5 percent. But due to a resilient export sector and government support measures, economic damage will be smaller than expected and a strong recovery is projected.

Today, Slovenia still leads the region in most metrics of human development. However, despite its success, there is a persistent lag compared to the living standards of the most developed EU Member States, in part due to a gap in productivity and value-added per employee in the country.

In order to bridge this gap, comprehensive improvements in the political and legal system and in the overall business environment are necessary, as well as a faster pace of greening the economy and digitalization. Larger investments in infrastructure, research and innovation will be needed without endangering the comparatively strong welfare state and public healthcare.

Thomas Schad

Facticity, Identity, and Emotionality: Cultural Strategies addressing Genocide Denial in the Case of Srebrenica

Twenty-six years after the Srebrenica genocide, the topic remains a discursive minefield. On the one hand, there are the facts and a self-confident commemorative culture of the genocidal events of July 1995. On the other hand, revisionism, negation and counter-memorialization. This essay is grounded in three sources: first, the findings of the “Srebrenica Genocide Denial Report 2021” by the Memorial Center Srebrenica; secondly, the proposals for breaking the narrative of genocide denial by Jasmila Žbanić, director of the film “Quo Vadis, Aida?”; and finally, the results of the anti-revisionist, cross-national projects “Ko/Tko je prvi počeo?” (Who started first?) and “Histoire pour la liberté” (History for freedom) complete this contribution. The aim of the essay is not merely to identify reasons, backgrounds, and interests in the revisionist discourse. Rather, it suggests possible solutions to this polarized situation which could be relevant beyond the regional framework.

Melanie Hien

Hungary’s Treatment of NGOs – David versus Goliath?

Civil society in Hungary went through different stages in the past two decades. In recent years a public debate about foreign funding and influence on NGOs emerged. In 2021, this debate resulted in the collapse of a large funding opportunity by the European Free Trade Association for civil society organizations in Hungary. Further legislation such as the “Stop Soros” regulation in 2018 were adopted which ban foreign organizations from Hungary and criminalize their work. In addition, billboard campaigns and media reports harm NGOs’ reputation. In Hungary there is a divide between so-called national and international non-governmental organizations, which has its roots in the defeat of the Fidesz party in the general elections in 2002. Back then, Orbán encouraged his companions to form new movements to bring Fidesz back to office. Subsequently, the so-called “civic circles” emerged. Narratives such as the nation, enemies, religion, and family moved to the centre of attention and determined government policy after Fidesz returned to power in 2010.

Belfjore Qose / Christian Voß

Pajtim Statovci and the “Cultural Genitals” of Being Albanian – New Queer Literature from Finland and Kosovo

The article discusses three novels written by the Finnish-Kosovar author Pajtim Statovci: *My Cat Yugoslavia* (2014), *Crossings* (2016) and *Bolla* (2019). All three novels describe circle migration of young Kosovars and/or Albanians to and from Finland and challenge categories of nation and gender. Statovci is blending queerness and Albanianness as cultural metaphors to describe gender transgressions as utopian anti-identities leaving behind generational family conflicts. Nevertheless, the protagonists are conditioned and “earthed” by the fantastic world of Albanian mythology. This way, Statovci is able to interpret Albanianness as a perfect stage for his queer heroes and breaks down deeply rooted stereotypes of Balkan backwardness.