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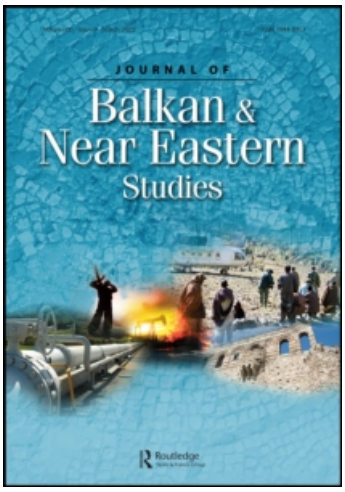

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Parties and the party system of Serbia and European integrations

SLAVIŠA ORLOVIĆ

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In this paper, we consider the impact of the Europeanization process on the parties and party system of Serbia. First of all, we consider five fields of party Europeanization: political/programme contents, organization, the model (pattern) of party competition, the party–government relationship and the relationship with the supranational party system,[1] as well as the specifics of a case study of Serbia.

Political parties play a central role in contemporary European politics. The term 'Europe' has become pretty flexible. Many perceive themselves as being part of it, yet formally many are still outside it. Political parties are at the same time both subjects and objects of changes conditioned by European integration processes. In states that are becoming members of the European Union (EU), parties have played an active role but they themselves have undergone changes in this process. While old members created European policies, new members are only in position to incorporate them in their legal and political systems.[2] After the first direct elections for the European Parliament in 1979, we can also talk about the European party system alongside the national party systems. The latter differ depending on the actual phase a state is in within the European integration process: a member, a candidate, in the negotiation process or simply a prospective applicant for EU membership. Political parties, torn by processes related to international or supranational entities, are still more efficient in national arenas.[3] For the member states, European integrations have created a new arena for party activity and for 30 years already party elites have been preparing candidates and party manifestoes in competition for the European Parliament. In this way, parties are building bridges among sovereign nations and via supranational sovereignty which makes decisions related to member states. MEPs are elected in as many ways (diverse sets of election rules) as there are members of the EU. At the EU level, political parties are represented in a dual way: as party groups

[1]Robert Ladrech, 'Europeanization and political parties: towards a framework for analysis', *Party Politics*, 8(4), 2002, pp. 389–403.

[2]Danica Fink-Hafner and Alenka Krašovec, 'Europeanisation of the Slovenian party system—from marginal European impacts to the domestification of EU policy issue?', *Politics in Central Europe*, 2, June 2006, p. 5.

[3]Kurt Richard Luther and Ferdinand Muller-Rommel (eds), *Political Parties in the New Europe*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005, p. 295.

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composed of MEPs from ideologically compatible parties (party families) and extra-parliamentary (transnational) organizations.[4]

Integration with the EU is one of the biggest challenges in the Balkans. As Ivan Krastev points out: 'The paradigm of integration is the only long-term vision of policy for the region, and that explains the fact that its influence is increasingly strong.'[5] This process, among other things, also implies the stabilization of the region and the Europeanization of the Balkans, which was and still is a synonym for a non-European way. The implosion of communism influenced the development of the states and societies of the former SFRY. What is common to all of them is that EU membership is the most desirable future. The Western Balkans is a term the EU uses for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro (alternatively, former Yugoslavia minus Slovenia plus Albania). At the Thessaloniki Summit in 2003, the Council of Europe clearly opened up the perspective for this region: 'The future of the Balkans is in the EU.'[6] Unlike other states in the region, there are two specific problems waiting for Serbia: cooperation with the Hague Tribunal and the unresolved status of Kosovo.

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Democratization of Serbia and consolidation of the party system

Serbia shares certain similarities with other post-communist societies of this region, yet there are also some significant differences. While on the one hand integrative Europeanization processes are underway, the disintegration of former Yugoslavia is entering its final phase (Montenegro in 2006, Kosovo awaiting a new status in 2007). It is necessary to divide the 1990–2000 period into the time of Milošević and the post- Milošević era. The 1990s was a most difficult period for Serbia: wars for the legacy of the SFRY, foreign-political isolation and UN sanctions, the NATO bombing campaign, along with Milošević's authoritarianism. It had adopted an anti-European, if not an out-of-European stance. After the political changes of 2000, an improvement in relations with the EU and admission to its membership became the priorities of the new Serbian government. When speaking about Serbia, there is a direct interdependence between democratization and Europeanization processes. These processes are therefore complementary. It is not rare that democracy is understood as harmonization with the EU's standards.

The Serbian party system

Changes to the state's borders (SFRY, FRY, Serbia and Montenegro, Serbia) also changed the framework and nature of party competition. We shall regard the

[4]The largest are the European People's Party (EPP), the Party of European Socialists (PES) and the European Federation of Liberal, Democratic and Reform Parties (ELDR); smaller groups like the European Federation of Green Parties, which replaced the Green Alliance in June 1993. Membership on an individual basis is formally prohibited and only allowed for national party delegations. Kurt Richard Luther and Ferdinand Muller-Rommel (eds), *Political Parties in the New Europe*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005, p. 296.

[5]Ivan Krastev, *Zamka nefleksibilnosti, Frustrirana društva, slabe države i demokratija*, UNDP, Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence, Beograd, 2004 (UNDP Issue Papers, *The Inflexibility Trap: Frustrated Societies, Weak States and Democracy*), p. 19.

[6]EU Western Balkans Summit, Thessaloniki, 21 June 2003; 'Declaration?', <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/see/sum_08_03/decl.htm>.

party system as 'the network of competitive relationships between political parties',[7] through the influences of institutional elements and social structures, primarily of social cleavages. The electoral system in Serbia was created in 1992 with the transition from a majoritarian to a proportional electoral system. Serbia is a single electoral district, with the threshold set at 5 per cent. After 2003, the threshold has been abolished for the parties of the national minorities. Serbia has a semi-presidential system. During the 1990s political competition was reduced to the conflict between nationalists and Westerners. Nationalism always potentially carries or reproduces anti-Western sentiments. Yet campaigns in the country have recently been more oriented to socio-economic themes and European issues while the nationalistic discourse has started to be abandoned.

In the 1990s the Serbian party system was characterized by a dominant party (the 'SPS'). Milošević and his SPS won the majority of votes and had a single-party government only after the first multiparty elections in 1990, yet up until 2000 they were in power with the assistance of other parties in coalition governments.[8] On the other hand, there were some attempts to unite the democratic opposition in the framework of a single umbrella coalition (DEPOS, 1991; Zajedno, 1996). In the 2000–2006 period it had the characteristics of polarized pluralism according to Sartori's criteria.[9]

During 2000, democratic opposition parties united in the DOS (Democratic Opposition of Serbia).[10] After the breakup of the umbrella organization DOS due to the leaders' vanity and the parties' programme differences, the fragmentation of the party system increased.

[7]Douglas W. Rae, 'The network of competitive relationships between political parties is what I mean by the term political party system', *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT and London, 1967, p. 47.

[8]At the first multiparty elections in 1990 there was a majoritarian electoral system (two rounds). The SPS won 46 per cent of the votes which thanks to the electoral system brought it 77.6 per cent of the mandates, that is, 194 out of 250 seats in the Assembly of Serbia. That was a single-party government. At the next elections in 1992 a proportional electoral system was introduced, with nine electoral districts. The SPS won 28.8 per cent of the votes and 40.4 per cent of the seats in Parliament (101 out of 250). This government lasted for nine months. At the elections in 1993 (a proportional electoral system, nine electoral districts), the SPS won 36.7 per cent of the votes and 42.2 per cent of the seats (123 out of 250), the Socialists needed three seats for a majority and they formed a government with the assistance of the 'opposition' New Democracy which had won six deputies' seats on the list of the DEPOS Coalition, which consisted of the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), the New Democracy (ND) and the Civic Alliance of Serbia (GSS). At the elections in 1997 (a proportional electoral system and 29 electoral districts), the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS)–Yugoslav Left (JUL)–ND won 34.25 per cent of the votes and 44 per cent of the seats (110 out of 250). A coalition government was formed involving the SPS, JUL and the Serbian Radical Party (SRS), the so-called 'red–black coalition' but, on the insistence of the radicals, without the ND.

[9]Giovanni Sartori, *Stranke i stranački sustavi (Analitički okvir)* [Parties and Party Systems. A Framework for Analysis], Political Culture, Zagreb, 2002, pp. 120–127.

[10]The DOS—Democratic Opposition of Serbia—which was created by uniting 18 political parties at the beginning of 2000, although not all members were (classical) parties, as follows: Democratic Party (DS), Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), Social Democracy (SD), Civic Alliance of Serbia (GSS), Demo-Christian Party of Serbia (DHSS), New Serbia (NS), Movement for Democratic Serbia (PDS), Social Democratic League of Vojvodina (LSV), Reformist Democratic Party of Vojvodina (RDSV), Alliance of Hungarians from Vojvodina (SVM), Vojvodina Coalition (KV), Democratic Alternative (DA), Democratic Centre (DC), New Democracy (ND), Social Democratic Union (SDU), Sandzak Democratic Party (SDP), League for Sumadija (LZS), Serbian Resistance Movement–Democratic Movement (SPO-DM) and Association of Free and Independent Unions.

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After adopting the new constitution in 2006, the party system has entered a more stable phase but the unresolved issue of Kosovo's status remains and questions about future relations toward membership in NATO are still open because the SRS, SPS and DSS have some reservations, making this process somewhat uncertain.

The party system in Serbia changed in the 1990–2007 period, primarily as a consequence of the results of the seven parliamentary elections called in that time: 1990, 1992, 1993, 1997, 2000, 2003 and 2007. An important trait of all these elections is that there were major oscillations in the strength of all the parties, indicating the weakness of both the parties and the party system. One could quantify these oscillations in terms of 'total electoral volatility', which means the percentage of votes which 'went from one party to the other' compared with the previous elections. Chronologically, the figures on differences in the percentage of votes given to Serbian parliamentary parties are as follows: 1992—48.1; 1993—24.4; 1997—26.2; 2000—110; 2003—41.5; and 2007—18.84 where the 'average total electoral instability' is 44.84. This high level of fluctuation of the achievement of parties at elections is not however only typical of Serbia.[11]

In a socially non-established party system where, apart from the last parliamentary elections in 2007, political themes dominated instead of economic–social ones, it is difficult to count on stable support and party identification. The inconstancy and instability of the electoral body are considerably reduced when seen through the prism of party blocs (*bloc volatility*, Bartolini and Mair) because in this way it is almost obvious that voters oscillate among similar parties and very little among distant parties. Good examples are the DS-G17 PLUS, DS-DSS, DS-LDP and SPS-SRS. The best example is that the SRS almost absorbed the SPS after 2000.

The effective number of parties[12] in Serbia was in 1990—1.4; in 1992—3.4; in 1993—3.3; in 1997—3; in 2000—4.9; in 2003—5; and in 2007—5.5. There is a problem of measuring the coalitions. We treated a coalition as one party.

In almost all parties in Serbia there are leadership tendencies and the ambition of the party leader to accumulate as much authority as possible for making key political and personnel decisions, as well as to accumulate and distribute party power.[13]

Therefore, party leaders in Serbia have huge powers which can be confirmed by inspecting the evolution of political parties' statutes from the start to the end of the 1990s. Almost all parties augmented their leader's authorities; the possibility that the leader names as much as one-third of the main board, the impact on the election of MPs, etc. Due to the unclear and similar programmes of the political parties, ordinary citizens are forced to identify parties with their

[11]We wrote about this in: 'Europeanization and democratization of parties and party system of Serbia' [Special issue: Democratisation and Europeanisation of political parties in Central and South-Eastern Europe], *Politics in Central Europe (PCE)—The Journal of the Central European Political Science Association*, 3(1/2), 2007, pp. 92–105.

[12]Laakso Marku and Rein Taagepera, 'Effective number of parties: a measure with application to West Europe', *Comparative Political Studies*, 12, 1979, pp. 3–27; here we use the same approach described in: Taagepera Rain and Mattew Sobert Shugart, 'Seats and votes: the effects and determinants of electoral systems', *The Effective Number of Parties*, Chapter 8, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1989.

[13]We wrote in detail about this in: 'Liderstvo u politickim partijama Srbije' [Leadership in political parties of Serbia], in Zoran Lutovac (ed.), *Politicke stranke i biraci u drzavama bivse Jugoslavije* [Political Parties and Voters in States of the Former Yugoslavia], Institute of Social Sciences and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Belgrade, 2006, pp. 137–171.

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leaders. Leaders perform the majority of PR, conduct the personnel policy, interpret the programme and party statute, carry out redistributions of power, negotiate with coalition partners and keep all channels of party financing in their own hands. The presidents of parties hold the front positions for a long time. They remain in power despite numerous defeats, have almost absolute power in making decisions, interpreting the party programme, controlling electoral lists and elected MPs. Leaders often arbitrarily determine the direction of party politics. Since parties are basically the leaders, party chiefs are mostly the protagonists of the most important electoral messages and are often an important factor in winning voters over. An important characteristic of party leaders in Serbia is 'the personalisation of politics'. In this 'hunt for voters', the leader himself is the symbol, message and programme. According to Sartori, in places where the party system is not structured the predominant determinant of electoral behaviour is related to the reputation and authority of a person, and we have a situation of voting for a person rather than for a party.[14]

Within political parties there are conflicts among members and officials, whether they are strong or poor, quiet or loud, as part of aspirations to acquire positions of power and influence. In these attempts there can be intraparty disagreements and conflicts. Leaders suppress their competition and rivals inside the party and have an important impact on internal conflicts with the power of their authority and competencies, depending on their role in specific misunderstandings. In relation to internal conflicts, leaders succeed to impose their will and to win. If the party or its leader does not have the internal capacity to articulate these conflicts, factions and party divisions are inevitable. A party can exist integrally as long as it has the internal capacity to balance the different nuances of concepts and to canalize them within a unique party flow. Groups inside a party which have considerable differences in concept gather first as factions. In Serbia, there is almost no party which did not initially arise from another party, while a few parties have often emerged from a single party.[15]

An analysis of the theory and praxis of parties in Serbia leads to the conclusion that the main political power is hidden in political parties' internal structures, where a group of people, an oligarchy within which one has a key position, makes the main political decisions and carries out a power redistribution. What is set in the core of the oligarchy is always put on the agenda and executed at government and parliament sessions. Oligarchic power in political parties reveals the double connection of politics and money. Political power can be a way to wealth, while wealth can also make its way to political

[14]Sartori Giovanni, *Stranke i stranački sustavi (Analitički okvir)* [Parties and Party Systems. A Framework for Analysis], Political Culture, Zagreb, 2002, p. 287.

[15]From DS: SLS (1990)—Serbian Liberal Party; DSS (1992)—DHSS (1997)—Demo-Christian Party of Serbia; DC (1994 NGO, 1996 party)—Democratic Centre; NDS (2001)—Popular Democratic Party; LDP (2005)—Liberal Democratic Party. From SPO—SNS (1994)—Unified Popular Party; SPO—Together (1997); NS (1998)—New Serbia; NS—Justice (2000)—Popular Party—Justice; DSPO (2005) Democratic Serbian move of renewal. From SRS—RSS (1993)—Radical Party of Serbia; SRS—Nikola Pašić (1994); URSS (1996)—United Radical Party of Serbia. From SPS—SDP (1992)—Social Democratic Party; DA (1997)—Democratic Alternative; DSP (2000)—Democratic Socialist Party; SSP (2000)—Serbian Social Democratic Party; SNP (2002)—Socialist Popular Party; GSS—SDU (1996)—Social Democratic Union. This is a supplemented review, first illustrated in: Slaviša Orlović, *Političke partije i moć* [Political Parties and Power], Jugoslovensko udruženje za političke nauke i Čigoja štampa, Beograd, 2002, p. 273.

power. Members of the 'old' oligarchy use their political mechanisms to obtain economic power, to be able to control political power with their money, 'from the shadows' after resigning from power. In this vicious cycle of a game of power and for power, oligarchic power in political parties is the main seat and centre, the main mediator and the main actor. Inside this oligarchic core the central chair is occupied by the party leader.

Women in politics

When it comes to gender equality Serbia has chosen the best experiences of EU member states. The new Constitution stipulates the equality of women and men, aimed at carrying out an equal opportunity policy and guaranteeing the equal representation of women in the National Assembly. In a formal legal sense, the equality of women in politics is better regulated in Serbia than in the majority of the most developed EU members, and even the most developed Southern European countries.[16] The recommendation of the OSCE for women to be represented at the level of 30 per cent on electoral lists is being more and more taken into account. Still, although women increasingly have the same rights this still does not mean they have the same position. One standard recommended by the EU is the equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes, as a need of democracy. In the Parliament of Serbia in 2000 there were 10.8 per cent of women, while in 2003 there were 12.4 per cent.[17] After the 2007 elections, the Assembly of Serbia has 50 female deputies, which is exactly 20 per cent of the total 250 mandates. This represents a significant improvement compared to the last one as the number of women has almost doubled.[18]

Women's organizations have been formed in the Democratic Party, G17 Plus, the Civic Alliance of Serbia, the Social Democratic League of Vojvodina, New Serbia, the Social Democratic Party and the Liberals of Serbia and Democratic Vojvodina. In seven political parties out of the eight mentioned which have women organizations, a quota of 30 per cent of positions in party bodies has been stipulated for the less represented gender.[19]

[16]In the parliaments of eight European countries there are more than 30 per cent women, while in Southern Europe the parliaments of Macedonia, UNMIK Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia have more women than the average in today's 27 EU members.

[17]Per party affiliation, the shares of women in Parliament in 2003 were as follows: G17 Plus—29.7 per cent, DS—16.2 per cent, DSS—13.2 per cent, SPO-NS—9 per cent, SRS—4.9 per cent, SPS—4.5 per cent.

[18]Although all parties claimed they would respect this recommendation of the OSCE, after the 2007 elections only G17 did so—out of 19 mandates, seven belong to female deputies (36.8 per cent). The Democratic Party offered 15 seats out of 61 to women (24.6 per cent), the Democratic Party of Serbia six out of 33 (18.8 per cent), the Serbian Radical Party gave women 13 mandates out of 81 (16.04 per cent), while the Socialist Party of Serbia will be represented by only two female deputies out of 19 (10.52 per cent). The League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina equally divided its four mandates. New Serbia will be represented by two female deputies (20 per cent), United Serbia by one (out of two mandates it won), while the Serbian Democratic Renewal Movement gave both its mandates to men, the same as with the List for Sandzak. Out of three mandates, the Alliance of Hungarians from Vojvodina gave one to a woman. In percentage shares, the smallest number of female deputies will be among the socialists (two) and radicals (13 out of 81 deputies).

[19]Jelica Rjacic-Capakovic and Marijana Pajvancic, 'Zene u politickim strankama' [Women in political parties], in *Politicke stranke u Srbiji, struktura i funkcionisanje* [Political Parties in Serbia, Structure and Functioning], Institute of Social Sciences and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Belgrade, 2005, pp. 75–90.

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Parties of the national minorities

The status of minorities in a country is seen as an indicator of democratic achievements and one of the criteria of the implementation of European standards. Since 2000, Serbia has recorded tendencies of a decrease in the anti-minority mood and the integration of minority parties into the system. After the political changes in Serbia in 2000, significant attention was paid to the position and protection of national minorities. In that same year, the Federal Ministry of National and Ethnic Communities was established, which was then in 2003 renamed the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights. After the elections in 2000, the Alliance of Hungarians from Vojvodina and the Sandzak Democratic Party (a party of Bosnjaks) entered the governing structures, while after the elections in 2003 and 2007 the List for Sandzak and the Sandzak Democratic Party did the same.[20] In 2002, the FRY adopted the Law on the Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities.[21] This Law stipulates a Federal Council for National Minorities composed of the representatives of minorities and the government, along with National Councils as self-governance bodies for each minority.

Minorities can represent an 'ethnic' opposition which is sometimes a 'territorial opposition'.[22] When minorities are integrated into and accommodated within the system, they do not wish to separate from the state in which they live. This is particularly important bearing in mind that in Serbia minorities are concentrated territorially and in the border areas: Bosnjaks in Sandzak, Albanians in Kosovo and in the south of Serbia and Hungarians in Vojvodina.

Ethnic cleavages and the party competition for 'ethnic votes' influence the party system. Party competition itself is not a perfect reflection of ethnic conflicts.[23] The 'centre–periphery' cleavage is shaped by the dominant national culture against ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities in peripheral regions.

The problem of minorities in the Balkans is, among others, that the national borders do not correspond with the state borders and that the national minorities are a delegitimizing factor in post-communist societies. There is no doubt that national minorities can represent a factor of a cleavage, but even more they can represent bridges supporting cooperation with neighbouring countries in the region.

No party in Serbia has changed its name (except New Democracy into the Liberals of Serbia), as has occurred in some other countries.

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[20]Joseph Kasa (Kasza Jozsef) from the Alliance of Hungarians from Vojvodina was the Vice-President in Djindjic's government. Rasim Ljajic was the Minister for Human and Minority Rights, and representatives of the List for Sandzak were state secretaries.

[21]The Law on the Protection of Rights and Freedom of National Minorities, Official Gazette of the FRY, 2002.

[22]Seymon Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, 'Territorial opposition set limits to the process of nation-building; pushed to their extreme they lead to war, secession, possibly even population transfers', 'Cleavage structure, party systems and voter alignment: an introduction', in *Party Systems and Voter Alignments Cross-National Perspectives*, The Free Press, New York, 1967, p. 10.

[23]Seymon Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, 'Cleavage structure, party systems and voter alignment: an introduction', in *Party Systems and Voter Alignments Cross-National Perspectives*, 1967, p. 5.

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Elements of the Europeanization of parties and the party system of Serbia

Programmatic orientation of parties

Some parties in Serbia have become members of European party federations ('Europarties'). Of the relevant parties, the DS has been admitted to the Party of European Socialists ('PES'), a federation of social democratic, social and labour EU parties, with the status of an observer (December 2006). The DSS and G17 Plus have been accepted by the European People's Party (EPP), a federation of conservative, Christian-democratic and people's EU parties, with the status of an associate member (June 2005). This type of membership does not entirely correspond to the programme contents of these parties or the way they are perceived by the electoral body.[24] These new relations with the European party federations give them a privileged position in relation to rival parties in their countries from the aspect of obtaining European legitimacy and boosting possibilities of further lobbying. But first of all, they act as a signal of the recognition of forces which carry and share European values and beliefs. For parties in Serbia, Europarties can represent crucial mechanisms of programme and value standardization.[25] Their important role lies in explaining the importance and necessity for carrying out reforms in a society that seeks membership in the Union, aimed at the overlapping of democratization and Europeanization.

Besides the parties belonging to supranational federations, the typology of party families is also founded on a genesis from social conflicts and the political orientation of the parties (Beyme). When party programmes are concerned, certain changes in some parties are coming into view. The impact of membership in Socialist International (and later also in PES) is most felt in the case of the Democratic Party (DS). It has started to transform from the position of the 'civic centre' to a social democratic orientation. The DS defined itself as a 'modern party of the civic centre' (Electoral Programme of the DS, 1992). The Programme of 1997 offers a more developed definition of the DS as a party of the centre, in the Programme of May 2001 the Party de-ideologizes its position, while in the Programme adopted in October 2001 the ideological positioning of the party is completely abandoned. With its admission to Socialist International, the Party is turning towards social democratization (Electoral Programme of 2007). Although some parties have not changed their formal programmes, pro-European rhetoric is heard far more in public appearances.

The DSS more clearly moved toward a group of people's parties. It might be characterized as a conservative-national DSS. With G17 Plus and the LDP we feel a closeness to a liberal party family. The DSS, SPO, NS and PSS-BK are closer to the conservative party family.

[24]Vladimir Goati, *Partijske borbe u Srbiji u postpetooktobarskom razdoblju* [Party Struggles in Serbia in the Period after the October 5], Institute of Social Sciences and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Belgrade, 2006, p. 48.

[25]Paul G. Lewis and Zdenka Mansfeldova, 'Those European party federations, the Europarties, are the most crucial vehicles of standardization', in Paul G. Lewis and Zdenka Mansfeldova (eds), *The European Union and Party Politics in Central and Eastern Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2006, p. 263.

A significant change relating to attitudes to the EU is seen with the SPS. At its 6th Congress, this party formulated its goal of the inclusion of Serbia (then the FRY) in the EU, thus breaking off with its hitherto firm anti-European determination but continuing to refuse to cooperate with the Hague Tribunal (Declaration of the 6th Congress of the SPS, 2003).

The SRS is the strongest individual party in the Parliament of Serbia (2003—82; 2007—81 deputies). It has an extremely negative attitude to the EU and the USA. The SRS is an extreme nationalist party led by Vojislav Seselj, who is in detention in The Hague, awaiting trial. Lately, radicals have been repositioning in a populist party protecting the interests of the losers of the transition process (ethno-socialists). The increase in social inequality and destruction of the former middle class is a structural explanation of the mobilization of citizens' dissatisfaction. Radicals are an expression of the protest, revolt and rage of voters against the post-Milošević political elite, but are also a reaction to pressures from abroad. The SRS has retained its anti-Western and anti-European orientation. Although its support for adoption of the new Constitution (2006) was seen as an indicator of its desire to be a 'system party', the 'political will' of its president, Seselj, has, at least for now, put an end to such a possibility. It is a resolute attitude that radicals should strongly oppose attempts to have Serbia join NATO and the EU and to never enter any coalition with Tadic and Kostunica. This is still a position underpinning a policy 'against everything' which might be characterized as 'hopefully, out of the world'.

The Serbian Strength Movement ('PSS') has partly tried to mobilize the dissatisfaction of voters in Serbia. At the first presidential elections in which he participated, Bogoljub Karic (a minister without portfolio in Milošević's government, one of several tycoons, a former owner of BKTV and a former joint owner of Mobtel, a mobile telephone operator) won 568,691 votes (18.23 per cent) ahead of the governmental candidate. His model for creation of the Movement 'Power of Serbia' was Berlusconi's Forza Italia. During 2006, after an audit of the business operations of his system and under the pressure of charges, he left the country. His party participated in the parliamentary elections in 2007, but in his absence it remained below the threshold.

Are there changes in the parties' organization?

In their latest Statutes, some parties have introduced in their organization separate bodies dealing with international cooperation. The Statute of the Democratic Party stipulates an International Secretary (Article 59 of the Statute, 18 February 2006) who, on behalf of the Party, maintains relations with international political and non-governmental organizations. The Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO) has a Party Secretary for Foreign Affairs (Article 34 of the Statute, 28 July 2005) who 'carries out operative tasks related to international contacts and cooperation with other parties, party associations and international organizations'. The Civic Alliance of Serbia (GSS) has an International Board and an International Secretary (Article 40 of the Statute, 11 December 2004).

In G17 Plus, the internal conflict between the President and the Vice-President of the Party was caused by a dispute about the unfolding of negotiations with the EU. After only four years of the Party's existence, a serious dispute between two

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leading persons erupted—President Miroljub Labus and Vice-President Mladjan Dinkic. In the minority coalition government (2003–2006), Labus was a Vice-President in charge of European integrations while Dinkic was the Minister of Finance. After the suspension of the EU's negotiations with Serbia due to failure to meet obligations vis-à-vis the Hague Tribunal (May 2006), Labus proposed that members of the government from G17 Plus withdraw. These differences and 'cracks' in relations were postponed till the meeting of the main board of the party which was to choose between Labus' proposal—withdrawing from the government, and Dinkic's proposal—to announce the resignations for 30 September giving a deadline for resuming negotiations on accession to the EU. On voting on his proposal, the President of the Party, Labus, lost with 203 vs. 44 with nine invalid votes. Dissatisfied that his proposal had been rejected, at the same meeting he resigned from the post of Party President. The party was also left by the then President of the Parliament of Serbia Predrag Markovic, with the explanation that he 'kept his promise that he would leave the Party if Labus is not its president anymore'. Following this meeting, a 'purge' was carried out and the mandates of 'Labus' people' in the Assembly—Goran Paunovic, Ksenija Milivojevic, Branka Bosnjak and Vesna Obradovic—were terminated. Dinkic took over the leadership of the party until the Party Assembly, when he formally became its leader.[26]

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Party–government relationship (Assembly and Government)

In the 2003–2007 period the Assembly of Serbia discussed European integrations only once, on the occasion of adopting the Resolution on EU Association, as drafted by the Board for European Integrations in cooperation with the European Movement in Serbia (an NGO). This Resolution confirms that 'Serbian accession to the EU and Partnership for Peace program is a strategic national goal that the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia is going to support fully and continuously'.[27] Within the Assembly of Serbia, there is a Board for European Integrations composed of 14 deputies from all parliamentary parties. Association with the EU is significantly reflected in harmonization of the legal and institutional framework. The harmonization of legislation, that is, the introduction of European law and adequate standards and their implementation in domestic legislation, is a process which is present in the Parliament to a considerable extent. This process will become ever more intensified with Serbia approaching the EU.[28]

The Parliament's international activity also includes cooperation with the European Parliament and the parliaments of member states and those countries which are in the EU accession process. The proposed Stabilisation and

[26]On this see: Slaviša Orlović, 'Liderstvo u politickimm partijama Srbije' [Leadership in political parties of Serbia], in Zoran Lutovac (ed.), *Politicke stranke i biraci u drzavama bivse Jugoslavije* [Political Parties and Voters in States of the Former Yugoslavia], Institute of Social Sciences and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Belgrade, 2006, pp. 137–171.

[27]The Resolution was adopted on 13 October 2004. *Source*: <http://www.parlament.sr.gov.yu/content/cir/akta/ostalaakta.asp>.

[28]Institutional engineering in Western Europe is continually present as regards the EU. In Germany, according to Beyme, 1/5 of laws are a result of requests from Brussels. Klaus Von Beyme, 'Institutional engineering and transition to democracy', in *Democratic Consolidation in Eastern Europe, Institutional Engineering*, Vol. 1, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 5.

Association Agreement stipulates the establishment of a parliamentary Stabilisation and Association Board.

The Government leads negotiations in the association process, but does not report to the Parliament on developments. The Government of Serbia established the EU Integration Office[29] which carries out activities in the accession process. The Government adopted the National Strategy for the Accession of Serbia to the EU, which has not been submitted to the Assembly for adoption.

While in government parties are more sensitive to external requirements. As Ivan Krastev put it: 'Governments are elected after a love affair with the electoral body, but they are married to international donors. When viewed bottom-up, Balkan democracies are political regimes where voters are free to change governments, but are very limited to change policies.'[30]

Since 2000, governments in Serbia have mostly been pro-European and reformists. After adoption of the Constitution of Serbia[31] parliamentary elections in Serbia were called for 21 January 2007. The government, formed after the last parliamentary elections (15 May) is pro-European and is composed of the DS, DSS-NS and G17 Plus. The Government is gathered around five programme principles, which concern the issues of Kosovo and Metochy, European integrations, cooperation with the Hague Tribunal, social and economic politics and the fight against crime and corruption.

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Serbia caught in the 'trap of an unfinished past'

The unavoidable political hallmark of Serbia is its central position in the Balkans, the crossing point of civilizations and their influences, as well as the hyper production of history and therefore an obsession with the past instead of the future. The strong influence of the authoritarian heritage impacts on the present day, leading to a large extent towards Euroscepticism.[32]

Political life in Serbia during the 1990s had the characteristics of a closed state (by sanctions), a closed society (by prohibitions) and a closed system (by blockades), with fair political competition being neither allowed nor possible. Since the political changes in 2000, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has been integrated into international institutions and organizations within a very short time.[33] In December 2007, Serbia became a member of the Partnership for Peace.

[29]The EU Integration Office was established by the Decree of the Government on 8 March 2004 ('Official Gazette' No. 25/04) and continued to perform tasks of the former Sector for European Integrations of the Ministry for International Economic Relations.

[30]Ivan Krastev, *Zamka nefleksibilnosti, Frustrirana drustva, slabe drzave i demokratija* [The Inflexibility Trap: Frustrated Societies, Weak States and Democracy], UNDP, Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence, Belgrade, 2004, p. 31.

[31]The new Constitution of Serbia was adopted on 28–29 October 2006 at a Referendum and proclaimed on 8 November 2006 in the Assembly.

[32]Paul G. Lewis and Zdenka Mansfeldova, 'In the 1990s the dimensions of Euroscepticism and authoritarianism largely coincided', *The European Union and Party Politics in Central and Eastern Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2006.

[33]First, on 26 October 2000 it was admitted into the Stability Pact for South-East Europe, on 1 November in the United Nations, on 10 November membership in the OSCE was renewed, on 17 November it resumed diplomatic relations with the USA, Germany, France and Great Britain, on 20 December it became a member of the International Monetary Fund, while in April 2003 it became a member of the Council of Europe.

In June 2006, after the independence referendum in Montenegro Serbia became an independent state. The gross domestic product per capita in Serbia is US$4200,[34] while the unemployment rate is 20–30 per cent depending on the source.[35] After the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo and Metochy, Serbia incorporated a few waves of refugees or internally displaced people. The estimates are as high as 700,000 people.

Serbia and Montenegro and cooperation with the Hague Tribunal

Serbia entered European integration processes within the arrangement of the state union of Serbia and Montenegro.[36] In October 2004, the EU offered the 'dual track' principle. Serbia and Montenegro had a single market but two currencies as at the beginning of 2002 Montenegro had accepted the euro. 'Dual track' meant that the two republics were negotiating separately with the EU about economic issues, which make up about 80 per cent of the contents of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, but would been treated as a single state when talking about political criteria (democracy, the rule of law and minority rights, the harmonization of foreign policy with the EU). There was an important political condition for getting the Feasibility Study. In spite of problems in the functioning of the otherwise unfunctional common state of Serbia and Montenegro, slow progress in the association process was more caused by another reason. Serbia was requested to demonstrate a satisfactory level of cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia ('ICTY'). Through the principle of a 'voluntary surrender' in January and February 2005 many of those indicted for war crimes arrived at The Hague (although the main indictees, Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic, remain at large). Twelve of those indicted for war crimes voluntarily surrendered to the Tribunal, financial assets of The Hague fugitives were frozen and good cooperation was established between the Hague Tribunal Prosecutor's Office and the Special Court for War Crimes in Serbia. With guarantees from the Government of Serbia, several of those indicted were released until the beginning of their trial.[37] The resumed cooperation with the Hague Tribunal since the beginning of 2005 was enough to allow the commencement of association negotiations and in April 2005 a positive EU Feasibility Study was delivered, recommending the opening of negotiations on stabilization and association with Serbia and Montenegro. The negotiations commenced on 7 November 2005 and were suspended in June 2006, also due to a lack of cooperation with The Hague. Cooperation with the Hague Tribunal is keeping Serbia in the 'trap of its unfinished past'. The Hague's pressure and requirements along with the experience of the NATO intervention are used by extreme nationalists (and by the anti-Hague lobby) to exploit anti-Western and anti-democratic potential as these were linked to the bombing of Serbia (1999).

[34]The National Bank of Serbia, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development gives another estimation—US$3117, Transition Report 2006: Finance in Transition, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, London, 2006.

[35]National Employment Service, National Bank of Serbia, Economist Intelligence Unit, etc.

[36]At a Referendum held in May 2006 Montenegro chose independence.

[37]In December 2004, Jovica Stanisic and Franko Simatovic and then in 2005 also Vladimir Lazarevic, Milan Milutinovic, Nikola Sainovic and Dragoljub Ojdanic.

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The Government along with Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica (President of the DSS) deserve credit for starting the negotiations on association with the EU, but are also responsible for the suspension of the negotiations.

The negotiations between Serbia and the EU continued on 13 June 2007 but completing cooperation with The Hague is necessary to conclude the Stabilisation and Association Agreement ('SAA').

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Phases of Western Balkans' countries advancing towards the European Union (Table 1)[38]

Kosovo

Besides the cooperation with the Hague Tribunal, another large obstacle for Serbia on its path to Europe is the unresolved status of Kosovo. In 1999, Resolution 1244 of the UN Security Council introduced a de facto international protectorate over Kosovo. The final status of Kosovo is, among other things, important for answering the question of where are the international borders of Serbia as integration with the EU assumes a functional statehood and defined borders.[39] The EU requires a firm and stable consensus on the EU. This issue is a priority for the majority of parties in Serbia. However, if it becomes necessary to choose between association with the EU and the Kosovo issue, the response is uncertain. Since the Summit of the European Council in Thessaloniki in 2003, when the 'European perspective' was opened for the Western Balkans, there has been more and more talk about Kosovo in the EU together with its neighbours. A simpler interpretation is the choice 'Kosovo or Europe?' and a more subtle one is 'Kosovo in Serbia or Kosovo in Europe?', with the goal of a longer term perspective of stability and security in the region. Although formally being within the sovereignty and composition of Serbia, since 1999 the burden of maintaining security in Kosovo has been borne by the international community (UNMIK, KFOR). In spite of this, on 17 and 18 March 2004 violence erupted, with 33 violent incidents, once again confirming the volatility of this area. The beginning of 2006 saw the commencement of negotiations on the final status of Kosovo between Pristine and Belgrade, under the auspices of the international community. After the 2007 elections, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, Marti Ahtisaari, brought to Belgrade and Pristine a proposal for the new status. Instead of Ahtisaari, a three-member negotiation team has been appointed, consisting of the representatives of the EU, USA and Russia, which leads the negotiation process and will submit a report to the UN Security Council on 10 December 2007.

[38]*Source*: Jelica Minić and Jasminka Kronja, *Regionalna saradnja za razvoj i evropsku integraciju* [Regional Cooperation for Development and European Integration], European Movement in Serbia, 2007, p. 13.

[39]Judy Batt, *Sveske iz Šajoa, br. 81. Avgust 2005. Pitanje Srbije*, Institut za studije bezbednosti Evropska unija, Pariz, Beogradski fond za političku izuzetnost, 2005 (*Challot paper no. 81, August 2005, The Question of Serbia*, EU Institute for Security Studies, 2005), p. 9.

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Table 1. Phases in the Western Balkan countries' accession process to the EU

	Beginning of process of Stabilisation and Association	Feasibility report	Stabilisation and Association Agreement	Membership application submitted	Status of candidate for membership received	Beginning of negotiations for membership
Croatia	1999	May 2000	October 2001	February 2003	June 2004	October 2005
Macedonia	1999	June 1999	April 2001	March 2004	December 2005	No
Albania	1999	January 2003	June 2006	No	No	No
Montenegro	2000	April 2005	Signed in March 2007	No	No	No
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1999	November 2003	Finished negotiations in December 2005	No	No	No
Serbia	2000	April 2005	No	No	No	No

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Serbian public opinion on European integrations

After 10 years of the country's isolation, integration in the EU enjoys large support among the citizens of Serbia. The imperatives of integration are in that sense larger as experience of the UN's sanctions and the 'ghetto society' is strong and fresh. Since June 2002, the (pro)-European mood of Serbian public opinion has been checked quarterly or annually. From 2002 to 2007, about 70 per cent of Serbian citizens would vote 'yes' at a referendum on entering the EU. But an anomaly is present. Although 70 per cent of citizens support entry to the EU, a significantly smaller number supports the extradition of those indicted for war crimes, even though it is a condition for negotiations on the Association Agreement. According to these surveys, the idea of the EU in Serbia is in some sense a generator of optimism as the citizens associate it with a higher quality of life, better standards and the possibility of travel.[40] There are smaller instances of negative associations, for example: a lack of trust, permanent ultimatums, an unjustified policy and excessive demands are also present. Although a significant percentage of Serbian citizens support the idea of Serbian accession to the EU, it is unclear what that means exactly. The majority sees entry as benefits and privileges with respect to a rise in living standards. The aspect of the necessary changes which have to be realized on the way to the adjustment to a market economy and the rule of law is neglected. Looking at the results of public opinion polls in Serbia leads to the conclusion that while Milošević's Serbia during the 1990s kept distancing itself from Europe, the post-Milošević Serbia after 2000 sees the return to Europe as the only alternative (3/4 of citizens).

Social structure

In Eastern Europe it is necessary to make changes to the economic structure, which is inevitably also altering the social profile of these societies. As Sorensen says: 'Three basic economic changes must happen for the transformation of economy: 1. closed economy must be integrated in world market; 2. central planned economy must become market oriented; 3. state and public property shall become private property.'[41] Economic changes in Serbia have involved all three dimensions and this inevitably leads to 'winners and losers' of the transition. The exit from one, seemingly harmonious and non-conflictive but after all non-competitive society and system in which the working position is guaranteed administratively and fictively, evokes the fear and mistrust of the citizens used to the security provided by the state. In the short term, the economic transformation could appear as a 'valley of tears'. During the 1990s, Serbia represented a destroyed society in many senses. For example, civil wars, economic and political isolation of the country (UN sanctions), economic crisis, hyperinflation, a decline in GDP and general pauperization. In the chaos of socialism's disintegration, the ruling political and economic elite profited the most. They maintained their dominant position, delayed the transition and converted financial wealth from state cash into private gain. The atmosphere of civil

[40]Survey carried out by the SMMRI Group (Strategic Marketing and Media Research Institute Group) for the needs of the EU Integration Office of the Government of Serbia.

[41]George Sorensen, *Democracy and Democratization, Process and Prospects in a Changing World*, Westview Press, A Member of Perseus Books, 1998, p. 54.

war and sanctions allowed vague activities, the grey economy and smuggling. In the private transformation, those closer to the centres of power could take a larger share of the booty. It is not uncommon that the old elites were shiftier because they had already built the required infrastructure, channels and relations. According to Beyme, 'to managerial privatizations, post communist nomenclature—and not the exponents of peaceful revolution of candles—became owner of means for productions. In this condition, old dualism sounded like "populism against market liberalism".'[42] The old elites used their positions to transform themselves into new, market-oriented, economic and political elites. The old oligarchs became new owners of enormous wealth. The administrative-bureaucratic and security services are connected like snakes, retaining their acquired positions. Forces from the past became the creators of the future. Those who grew rich as war profiteers, who came from the grey zone of criminal activity, smuggling oil, cigarettes and weapons, have in some cases founded their own party (Karic, Movement Force of Serbia).

Instead of liberal values, the disintegration of communism was followed by national mobilization as a special form of collectivism. According to Mladen Lazić, in the first decade of the new century in Serbia, 'a confused value mixture, made of indifference, a conjunction of traditional and socialist value orientations, charged by irreflexive elements of liberalism' has been constituted. Although this mixture of values is dispersed at every social level, liberal values are more present at the higher levels (winners of the transition), while the intertwined traditional and socialist values are more present at the lower levels (mostly the losers of the transition).[43]

These changes in the social structure have left a trace on party orientation and identification as well as on the way citizens vote. In the series of CESID examinations,[44] winners (somewhat less on the personal, somewhat more on the social level) are generally oriented to liberal democratic parties, especially the Democratic Party. On the other side, the losers (somewhat less on the personal, somewhat more on the social level) are more oriented to social national parties, especially to radicals (SRS). On the third side, those who are in the middle on the personal and social levels, located between the winners and the losers, are in the first place potential abstainers (around 3/5), while those oriented to elections, to a social plan, are relatively equally divided between liberal democratic and social national parties, that is, between the Democratic Party and the Serbian Radical Party. In terms of the personal plan (the psychological experience of one's personal status), in this category, the advantage is held by the liberal democratic parties, that is, the Democratic Party.

Conclusion

In the circumstances of widespread support for EU membership it is in the interest of parties not to run against the stream, but in harmony with the prevailing climate of thought. It is well known that most politicians always join

[42]Klaus Von Beyme, *Transformacija političkih stranaka* [Transformation of Political Parties], FPN, Zagreb, 2002, p. 57.

[43]Mladen Lazić, *Promene i otpori, Srbija u transformacijskim procesima* [Changes and Resistance, Serbia in Transformation Processes], Filip Višnjić, Beograd, 2005, p. 105.

[44]Srećko Mihailović, 'Gubitnici i dobitnici tranzicije u Srbiji' [Winners and losers of the transition in Serbia], *Republika*, 1 June–31 July 2006.

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the majority. A number of politicians and parties supporting the European idea see the possibility to, on the one hand, increase their popularity while, on the other, they are not working enough on implementing these ideas or removing obstacles in the way. The elimination of obstacles which hinder Serbia's path to the EU calls for some unpopular moves, which are in discord with the electoral calculations of the country's political parties and their leaders.

Political parties in Serbia, above all those that have become members of European party families (DS, G17 Plus, DSS), reveal evidence of Europeanization in adapting their programmes and organization, as well as in imposing European themes in electoral campaigns. It is a fact that, after the parliamentary elections in 2007, those parties represent the governing majority, which makes the governmental policy pro-European and the European path for Serbia less ambiguous. Cooperation with the Hague Tribunal remains the biggest obstacle. Although the question of the future status of Kosovo is separate from the question of EU association, the dynamics and way of its solution will certainly influence the dynamics of EU association.

With respect to the engagement and activity of the parties on the way towards European integrations, we might define a conditional difference between pro-European active parties (DS, G17 Plus, LDP, SPO), pro-European less active parties (DSS, the suspension of association negotiations due to a lack of cooperation with The Hague) and inactive parties (SPS, since the 6th Congress of 2003 determined Serbia joining the EU) and anti-European parties (SRS). Among the relevant parties, the DS and G17 Plus emphasize the importance of Serbia joining the EU more than the others.

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Abbreviations

DOS Democratic Opposition of Serbia
DS Democratic Party
DSS Democratic Party of Serbia
G17 G17 Plus
SPO Serbian Renewal Movement
SPS Socialist Party of Serbia
SRS Serbian Radical Party
PSS 'Power of Serbia' Movement
NS New Serbia
SDP Social Democratic Party
LDP Liberal Democratic Party
SSJ Party of Serbian Unity
DHSS Christian Democratic Party of Serbia
SVM Alliance of Hungarians from Vojvodina
GSS Civic Alliance of Serbia
LSV League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina
JUL Yugoslav Left
ND New Democracy

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