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## Europeanisation and Democratisation of Parties and Party System of Serbia

*Slaviša Orlović*

**Abstract:** *The basic argument outlined in this paper is that in order to understand the impact of European integration on national parties and party systems, we have to find out how the majority of parties made adjustments to their programmes, platforms and public statements. There is a relationship between process of democratization and Europeanization. It is necessary to divide the period from 1990 to 2007 into the time of Milošević and the time after him. Political life in Serbia during the 1990s had characteristics of a closed state, closed society and closed system. During 2000, under external and internal pressures and with assistance of the civil society, democratic opposition parties united in the DOS, around the idea against Milošević and on the principle of a civic European orientation. After the political changes of 2000, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has been integrated into international institutions and organizations in a very short time. The party system in Serbia changed in the time frame 1990–2007, and this was primarily a consequence of the results of the seven parliamentary elections called in the period 1990–2007. An important trait of all these elections is that there were major oscillations in the strength of all parties. Also, the electoral system was changed several times. The major change was carried out in 1992, with transition from majoritarian to proportional electoral system. The last change of the electoral system came after the elections of 2003, when the census was abolished for parties of national minorities. After a ten-year isolation of the country, integration with the EU enjoys a large support among the citizens of Serbia. Although a significant percentage of citizens of Serbia support the idea of accession of Serbia to the EU, but the necessary changes are often neglected. The negotiations between Serbia and the EU are continued on June 13, 2007. Some Serbian parties have become members of European party federations (families). Parliamentary elections were held on January, 21st 2007. The government is formed by DS, DSS-NS and G17, as a majoritarian, democratic and pro-European government. Two the biggest challenges for this government are the cooperation with the Hague Tribunal, and unsolved status of Kosovo.*

**Key words:** *Europeanization, political parties, party system, Europarties*

The aim of this paper is to determine the existence – and the level of impact – of the process of European integration, i.e. Europeanization, on the political parties and party system of Serbia. The process of Europeanization is closely connected with that of democratization, based on which it is necessary to divide the period from 1990 to 2007 into the time of Milošević and the period after him, when admission to the EU became a priority. This paper also treats the changes of the party and electoral systems

in that period and analyses the surveys and research, carried out after 2000, on the questions of EU integration. Also mentioned is cooperation with the Hague Tribunal, as an important factor for integration, as well as the admission of some of the Serbian parties to European party federations.

This article is based on previous research and used methods, which are focused on the institutionalization of party systems (Mainwaring, 1998). In addition the article is also based on research and used methods focusing on the European influence on national party systems (Mair, 2000) and some other fields, influenced by Europeanization; policy/programmatic content, party organization, patterns of party competition, party-government relations and relations beyond the national party system (Ladrech, 2002), the role of Europarties (Enyedi and Lewis, 2006), as well as concrete case studies and comparisons (Fink-Hafner and Krašovec, 2005; Fink-Hafner, 2007). The issue is shown by the fact that Serbia is in the initial phase of the process of admission to the EU, and therefore the mentioned models cannot be used completely.

## **Europeanization and democratization**

When discussing Serbia we can say that there is a direct interdependence between democratization and Europeanization processes. They both require the respect of defined standards and the application of specified criteria. These processes are, therefore, complementary. It is not rare that democracy is understood as harmonization with the EU standards, and states applying for the EU membership, depending on their status and phase in this process, are supervised and monitored by the EU. In these processes, Serbia has certain similarities with other post-communist societies of this region, but also some significant differences. While on the one hand integrative Europeanization processes are underway, the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia is entering its final phase (Montenegro in 2006; Kosovo is awaiting a new status in 2007). The 1990s were the most difficult period for Serbia: the wars for the legacy of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, isolation and UN sanctions, the NATO bombing campaign and Slobodan Milošević's authoritarianism, which was anti-European and isolated Yugoslavia from Europe. After the political changes of 2000, the improvement of relations with the EU, and membership of it became the priorities for the new Serbian Government.

In terms of similarities with other post-communist states, Serbia did not miss the process in which the collapse of communism caused the dissolution of communist federations (USSR, Czechoslovakia and SFRY) along national-federal lines. The implosion of communism was simultaneously followed by an explosion of nationalism. During the 1990s political competition was reduced to a conflict between nationalists and pro-Westerners. Nationalism always potentially bears or reproduces anti-Western sentiments, and ever since the introduction of the multi-party system, nationalists have shown an "unattainable advantage in elections" (Pavlović, 2004: 184).

## **Serbia during the 1990s and after 2000**

Political life in Serbia during the 1990s had the characteristics of a closed state (through sanctions), closed society (by prohibitions) and a closed system (through blockades), with fair political competition neither being allowed nor even possible. Milošević and his SPS party won a majority of votes only in the first multi-party elections in 1990 and had a single-party government, but until 2000 he and his party were in power with the assistance of other parties in coalition governments<sup>1</sup>.

In 2000, under external and internal pressures and with the assistance of civil society, democratic opposition parties united under the DOS (Democratic Opposition of Serbia)<sup>2</sup>. The DOS joined together against Milošević, on the principle of a civic European orientation. An agreement was reached that the President of the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) would be the presidential candidate of this coalition in the election of the President of Yugoslavia, and the President of the Democratic Party (DS) would be the future Prime Minister of the Republic<sup>3</sup>. Milošević lost the presidential elections, but he had to be defeated twice, once in the elections and for the second time through demonstrations when he defended his election victory. After the political changes of 2000, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has been integrated into international institutions and organizations in a very short time<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> In the first multiparty elections in 1990 there was a majoritarian electoral system (two-round). The SPS won 46 percent of votes which, thanks to the electoral system, gave it 77.6 percent of mandates, i.e. 194 out of 250 seats in the Assembly of Serbia, and this was a single-party government. In the next elections in 1992 a proportional electoral system was introduced, with nine electoral districts. SPS won 28.8 percent of votes and 40.4 percent of seats in parliament (101 out of 250); this government lasted for nine months. In the 1993 elections (proportional representation system; nine electoral districts). The SPS won 36.7 percent of votes and 42.2 seats (123 out of 250), and the Socialists needed three seats for a majority. They formed a government with the assistance of the “opposition”, New Democracy, which won six deputies’ seats on the list of the DEPOS Coalition, consisting of the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), New Democracy (ND) and the Civic Alliance of Serbia (GSS). In the 1997 elections (proportional representation system and 29 electoral districts), the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS)-Yugoslav Left (JUL)-ND won 34.25 percent of votes and 44 percent of seats (110 out of 250). A coalition government was formed, made up of the SPS, JUL and Serbian Radical Party (SRS), the “red-black coalition”, but without the ND, on the insistence of the radicals.

<sup>2</sup> The DOS – the Democratic Opposition of Serbia was created by uniting 18 political parties at the beginning of 2000, although not all the members were (classical) parties, as follows: Democratic Party (DS), Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS); Social Democracy (SD); the 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 of Vojvodina (SVM); Vojvodina Coalition (KV); Democratic Alternative (DA); Democratic Centre (DC); New Democracy (ND); Social-democratic Union (SDU); Sandžak Democratic Party (SDP), League for Šumadija (LZS); Serbian Resistance Movement – Democratic Movement (SPO-DM) and Association of Free and Independent Unions.

<sup>3</sup> In the presidential elections held on 24 September 2000 the DOS candidate, Vojislav Koštunica, defeated Milošević, winning 50.24 percent of votes (2,470,304) versus 37.15 percent (1,826,799 votes for Milošević). The DOS also won the elections to the federal parliament by winning 42.9 percent of votes and 53.7 percent of mandates against 32.25 percent of votes and 40.7 percent of seats of the SPS.

<sup>4</sup> Firstly, on 26 October 2000, it was admitted in the Stability Pact for the Southeast Europe; on 1 November to the United Nations; and on 10 November the membership in OSCE was renewed. On 17 November Serbia resumed diplomatic relations with the USA, Germany, France and Great Britain; on 20 December it became a member of the International Monetary Fund, and in April 2003 a member of the Council of Europe.

The DOS won the elections for the Assembly of Serbia on 24 December 2000 (on a proportional representation system; Serbia was a single electoral district), by winning a two-thirds majority of seats<sup>5</sup>. The government of Prime Minister Zoran Djindjić (DS President at the time), formed after these elections, was a coalition, and the first democratic government, composed of both politicians and experts, was extremely pro-European and reformist.

The political changes of 2000 did not eradicate all the vestiges of Milošević's rule, and on 12 March 2003 forces of the old régime, which survived in the structure of the secret services, assassinated the Prime Minister of Serbia, Zoran Djindjić. The anti-Hague lobby, which criticized Djindjić for arresting Slobodan Milošević and extraditing him to the Hague Tribunal on 28 June 2001 (Milošević was extradited under the Djindjić government) is linked with the assassination. The killing of Zoran Djindjić was a huge loss for democratic Serbia and a step backwards in the Serbian process of democratization, reform and Europeanization; Zoran Živković of the DS was appointed prime minister. These events have had consequences for cooperation with the Hague Tribunal, with the threat of destabilization of Serbia.

After the elections in 2003, a minority government was formed, composed of a coalition of DSS, G17 Plus and SPO-NS, with a total of 109 out of 250 deputies, with the support of the SPS (plus 22 deputies), which is 131 out of 250 seats<sup>6</sup>. Vojislav Koštunica, the President of the DSS, became the Prime Minister. As V. Goati points out referring to this Government: "The programme of the Government of Serbia is, in its most important items, located in the middle of a linear continuum of pro-European/traditional: on the extreme points of the continuum, there are two opposition parties: the DS and SRS..." (Goati, 2006: 73).

## Serbian party system

Changes of the state frames (borders) (SFRY, FRY, Serbia and Montenegro, Serbia) also changed the framework and nature of party competition. We will consider the party system, "the network of competitive relationships between political parties" (Rae, 1967: 47), through influences of institutional elements and social structures, first of all of social cleavages.

The party system in Serbia changed in the period between 1990 and 2007, and this was primarily a consequence of the results of the seven parliamentary elections called in 1990, 1992, 1993, 1997, 2000, 2003 and 2007. An important characteristic

<sup>5</sup> In these elections the DOS won 64.4 percent of votes and 70.4 percent of seats in the Parliament – a two-thirds majority (176 out of 250). In just two months, from 24 September to 23 December, the SPS lost 1,016,996 votes (from elections for the Federal Parliament 1,532,841 votes to 515,845 votes in the elections for the Assembly of Serbia).

<sup>6</sup> In the elections for the Assembly of Serbia held on 28 December 2003, (proportional electoral system; single electoral district; turnout of 57.72 percent or 3,748,623 (of 6,493,672 registered voters) the SRS won 82 seats; the DSS 53; the DS 37; G17 Plus 34; SPO-NS 22 and the SPS 22.

of all them is that there were major oscillations in the strengths of all parties, which is an indicator of weakness of both the parties and the party system. One could quantify these oscillations by the “total electoral volatility”, which means the percentage of votes which “went from one party to the other” in comparison with the previous elections. These data were obtained by adding all the positive and negative differences in the percentage of votes given to the parliamentary parties as compared with previous elections. Diachronically, the data in the difference 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 fluctuation of the achievement of parties in elections is not typical of the other countries in the process of transition.

## **Electoral system**

Since the introduction of a multi-party system in 1990 the electoral system in Serbia has been altered several times. The most significant change to the electoral system was carried out in 1992, with a transition from a majoritarian to proportional electoral system. The other changes dealt with the number of electoral districts; in the 1992 and 1993 Serbian elections there were nine electoral districts; in the 1992 elections there were 29; and in the elections in 2000 and 2003 Serbia was a single electoral district. Throughout this time the electoral threshold was five percent. The last change to the electoral system came after the elections of 2003, when the threshold was abolished for parties representing national minorities. Throughout this period d’Hondt’s formula for converting votes into seats was used. In Serbia the 1990 Constitution introduced a semi-presidential system, which was retained also in the new 2006 Constitution.

## **Social cleavages**

When it comes to social structure, there is a particularly deep historical-ethnic cleavage (national-civic) in Serbia, which largely defines itself in the country’s political scene and slows down democratization and Europeanization processes. Slavujević (2003: 96) reminds us that the “horizontal” line of the historic-ethnic cleavage is supplemented by the “vertical” dimension, concerning the cleavage between nationalist and civic orientation among representatives of each ethnic group. Besides, empirical findings show that the axis of the “national-civic” historic-ethnic cleavage and the axis of “traditionalism-modernism” cultural-value cleavage do not intersect, but largely overlap, with “national” coinciding with “traditionalism” and “civic” with “modernism” (Slavujević, 2003: 98). In Slavujević’s opinion, this leads to the conclusion of synergic effects of these two axes of divisions to party grouping.

Parties and the party system of Serbia are not institutionalized (Mainwaring, 1998: 71). During the 1990s the party system of Serbia had characteristics of a system with a dominant party (SPS), and in the period 2000–2006 it had characteristics of polarized



pluralism according to Sartori's criteria (Sartori, 1976: 120–127). Evidence for this is in the following characteristics: firstly, the existence of “anti-system parties”, which do not share values of the political order in which they act. After the political changes of 5 October 2000, the SRS and SPS did not recognize the results of changes, considering them illegal and illegitimate. Secondly, the existence of a “bilateral opposition”, meaning that the two opposition parties could be closer to the ruling parties than to each other. The SRS and DS were closer to parties within the ruling coalition than each other: the DS is a natural ally of the DSS (once they were the same party) but when it comes to national issues, the SRS and DSS are closer.

### Public opinion of Serbia on European integrations

After the 10-year isolation of the country, integration into the EU enjoys large support among the citizens of Serbia. The Imperatives of integration are in that larger as experiences of the UN sanctions and “ghetto society” are strong and fresh.

A large percentage of the citizens of Serbia, when asked whether Serbia should join the EU, replied “yes”, about 72–26 percent, compared to 8–13 percent who said “no”. The vast majority of supporters, including both the radicals (SRS) and Milošević's socialists (SPS), are in favour of joining the EU<sup>7</sup>. Since June 2002 the (pro)-European mood of the public opinion of Serbia has been gauged quarterly or annually by opinion polls. According to these surveys, in Serbia the idea of the EU is, in some senses, a generator of optimism, as citizens associate it with a better quality of life, higher living standards and the opportunities to travel<sup>8</sup>. Besides positive associations, for a smaller percentage of the population the EU represented a lack of trust, constant ultimatums, unjustified policies and excessive demands. Although a significant percentage of citizens of Serbia support the idea of Serbian accession to the EU, it is not clear what this exactly means. The majority sees entry as benefits and privileges with respect a rise in living standards, although a consideration of the necessary changes which have to be made on the way to adjustment to a market economy and the rule of law has been neglected. From 2002 to 2006, about 70 percent of citizens of Serbia voted “yes” in the referendum on joining the EU. There is an anomaly here: although 70 percent of citizens support entry, a significantly smaller number supports extradition of those indicted for war crimes, although it is a condition for negotiations on the Association Agreement.

The EU enjoys greater trust than any other international organization, and although only half of the population trusts it, this is still a much higher level of support than for any Serbian national political institution.

<sup>7</sup> Srbobran Branković, *EU na srpskom politickom jelovniku/ (The EU on the Serbian Political Menu* Evropski forum, 1; [http://www.becei.org/EF\\_0105/SBrankovic0105.htm](http://www.becei.org/EF_0105/SBrankovic0105.htm)

<sup>8</sup> Survey carried out by the SMMRI Group (Strategic Marketing and Media Research Institute Group) for needs of the EU Integration Office of the Government of Serbia.

**Table 1: How would citizens of Serbia vote on referendum on entering the EU**

	I would vote yes (%)	I would vote no (%)	I would not vote (%)
June 02	67	9	14
September 02	68	13	10
December 02	70	8	13
March 03	76	6	12
December 03	72	8	12
June 04	72	7	12
September 04	71	12	17
September 05	64	12	16
September 06	69.9	12.3	17.8

Source: SMMRI 2002–2006, Survey carried out for needs of the Serbian Government's EU Integration Office<sup>9</sup>

In the last survey (SMMRI, September 2006), when citizens were asked to name a political figure who contributes the most to helping Serbia become a member of the EU, two-thirds of citizens named Boris Tadić (President of Serbia and President of the DS), and one-third mentioned Vojislav Koštunica (at that moment Prime Minister of Serbia and President of the DSS). Two more figures are recognized as significant: Mladjan Dinkić (Minister of Finance and President of G17 Plus) and Vuk Drašković (Minister of Foreign Affairs and President of the SPO). When a political figure is replaced by a party in the aforementioned question, more than a half (52 percent) of votes go to the DS, followed by the DSS (19 percent), G17 Plus (13 percent), and 6 percent of disappointed citizens claim that there is no such party. These results are also in accordance with the parliamentary election results, because the DS, DSS and G17 plus obtained the majority of votes and formed the new government.

Srbobran Branković, director of Medium Gallup, based in Belgrade, breaks down the picture of citizens of Serbia about the EU, asking the interviewees to choose the statement about Europe that most corresponds with their own attitude, from four options The statements are:

1. *Euroenthusiasts* say: “Europe is very important to me, and I think that we have to do everything we can to become part of it, which includes fulfilling all of the conditions it sets.” Twenty-two percent of interviewees share this attitude.
2. *Eurorealists* say: “I cannot say that Europe is particularly important to me, but I think that integration into the EU is necessary and that we have to work on it.” Thirty-five percent of interviewees have such an attitude.

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.becei.org/evropski%20forumi%20u%20pdf-u/Evropski\\_forum\\_1-2\\_2005.pdf](http://www.becei.org/evropski%20forumi%20u%20pdf-u/Evropski_forum_1-2_2005.pdf)



3. *Euroseptics* say: “I am suspicious of the intentions of Europe and the West in general, and I think that we have to join its structures very cautiously and slowly.” Twenty-nine percent of interviewees responded this way.
4. *Europhobes* say: “Integration with Europe would mean European and other forces would be more important than our people; Serbia does not belong to that world, and therefore we should maintain our traditional values and not be allowed us to enter that furious race”. Thirteen percent of interviewees share this attitude.

When these responses are compared with the party support, we find that the supporters of G17 Plus and the DS (of President Tadić) are the most devoted pro-Europeans. Forty-four percent of supporters of G17 Plus are Euroenthusiasts and 42 percent are Eurorealists; the figure similar is among supporters of the DS, of whom 37 percent are Euroenthusiasts and 42 percent Eurorealists. Supporters of the DSS (Koštunica) comprise 51 percent Eurorealists, 24 percent Euroseptics and 17 percent Euroenthusiasts. The “Power of Serbia” (PSS) movement of Bogoljub Karić had an unexpected number of Euroenthusiasts – 20 percent. Most PSS supporters are Eurorealists – 41 percent – and Europhobes – 31 percent. Supporters of Milošević’s SPS are the most anti-European. Among them there are no Euroenthusiasts: 47 percent are Euroseptics; 41 percent Europhobes and 12 percent are Eurorealists<sup>10</sup>.

According to the poll carried out by the Medium Gallup Belgrade in August 2004, party affiliation and determination for accession to the EU are as follows:

DS: 93 percent said yes, 1 percent said no; G17 Plus: 87 percent said yes and 9 percent said no; DSS: 86 percent said yes and 4 percent said no; PSS: 62 percent said yes and 16 percent said no; SRS: 66 percent said yes and 23 percent said no; SPS: 67 percent said yes and 25 percent said no; unaffiliated: 69 percent said yes and 9 percent said no; and abstainers: 63 percent said yes and 10 percent said no.<sup>11</sup>

Similarly, according to the research of the Centre for Free Elections and Democracy (CESID)<sup>12</sup>, 97 percent of DS supporters are in favour of EU entry; 93 percent of supporters of small parties; 93 percent of supporters of the PSS and 87 percent of the DSS. On the other hand, the smallest number of advocates of a pro-European stance can be seen among the supporters of the SPS – 49 percent,

<sup>10</sup> See also: Judy Batt, *Sveske iz Sajoa, No. 81, August 2005, Pitanje Srbije*, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris, Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence, 2005, p. 61, *Challot paper no. 81, August 2005, The Question of Serbia*, EU Institute for Security Studies 2005

<sup>11</sup> Medium Gallup Beograd, [http://www.becei.org/evropski\\_percent20formi\\_percent20u\\_percent20pdf-u/Evropski\\_forum\\_1-2\\_2005.pdf](http://www.becei.org/evropski_percent20formi_percent20u_percent20pdf-u/Evropski_forum_1-2_2005.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> *Izgradnja proevropske demokratske kulture kroz jačanje kapaciteta kreatora javnog mnjenja (Building of pro-European democratic culture through enforcement of capacities of public opinion creators)*, Spring 2005, *Političke podele u Srbiji – pet godina posle*, Srećko Mihailović et. al. (*Political divisions in Serbia – five years after*), <http://www.cesid.org/programi/istrazivanja/index.jsp>

and the SRS – 52 percent. When we count the relation to democracy without those who did not reply to this question (23 percent in the total sample, and among those without a party affiliation as much as 37 percent), then we see “clearer” relations to democracy. Specifically, pro-democratic attitudes everywhere are seen among more than half the population, except among the Socialists (SPS) and Radicals (SRS). Pro-democratic attitudes are the most frequent among the supporters of the DS (85 percent), DSS (74 percent), small parties (69 percent) and the PSS (68 percent), and the least frequent among those without a party affiliation (49 percent), SRS (30 percent) and SPS (only 18 percent). The claim: “In some cases, an undemocratic government can be better than a democratic one”, is the most frequently accepted by supporters of the SPS (66 percent) and SRS (44 percent).

A survey of the results of public opinion in Serbia leads to the conclusion that while Milošević’s Serbia during the 1990s kept its distance from Europe, the post-Milošević Serbia after 2000 sees that returning to Europe is the only way (three-quarters of citizens) forward.

## **EU Negotiations and Cooperation with the Hague Tribunal**

Serbia entered the European integration processes within an arrangement of the state union of Serbia and Montenegro<sup>13</sup>. In October 2004 the EU offered the “dual track” principle. Serbia and Montenegro had a single market, but two currencies, as Montenegro accepted the euro at the beginning of 2002. “Dual track” meant that the two republics negotiated separately with the EU on economic issues, which make about 80 percent of the content of the Stabilization and Association Agreement, but would be treated as a single state in terms of political criteria (democracy, rule of law, minority rights and harmonization of foreign policy with the EU). There was an important political condition to get the Feasibility Study. In spite of problems in the functioning of an otherwise dysfunctional joint state of Serbia and Montenegro, slow progress in the association process was caused rather 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 “voluntary surrender”, in January and February 2005, many of those indicted for war crimes arrived in The Hague (although the main suspects, Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić, remained free). Twelve of those indicted for war crimes voluntarily surrendered to the Tribunal, the 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 indicted were released until the beginning of the trial.<sup>14</sup> The resumed cooperation with

<sup>13</sup> Montenegro chose independence in the referendum in May 2006

<sup>14</sup> In December 2004 Jovica Stanišić and Franko Simatović, and then in 2005 Vladimir Lazarević, Milan Milutinović, Nikola Šainović and Dragoljub Ojdanić.

the Hague Tribunal since the beginning of 2005 was enough to initiate association negotiations, and in April 2005 a positive EU Feasibility Study was obtained, recommending opening 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. The cooperation with the Hague Tribunal keeps Serbia in the “trap of an unfinished past”. The Hague’s pressures and requirements, and the experience of the NATO intervention are used by extreme nationalists (and by the anti-Hague lobby) to exploit anti-Western and anti-democratic feeling because of their association with the bombing of Serbia (1999). The government and Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica (President of the DSS) deserve merit for starting the negotiations on association with the EU, but is also responsible for 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 Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA).

### **Members of European party federations (Europarties)**

Recently some parties in Serbia became members of European party federations (Europarties). Of the relevant parties, the DS has been admitted as an observer to the Party of European Socialists (PES), a federation of social-democratic, socialist and labourist EU parties (December 2006). The DSS and G17 Plus have been accepted (June 2005) as associate members of the European People’s Party (EPP), a federation of conservative, Christian-democratic and people’s EU parties. This type of membership does not entirely correspond with programme contents of these parties or the way they are perceived by the electorate (Goati, 2006: 48). New relations with European party federations (Europarties) bring them in a privileged position in relation to rival parties in their countries from the aspect of obtaining European legitimacy and increase of possibilities for further lobbying. But first of all, as a signal of recognition of forces which bear and share European values and beliefs. For parties in Serbia, Europarties can represent crucial mechanisms of programme and value standardization (Lewis – Mansfeldova, 2006: 263). Their important role is explaining the importance and necessity for carrying out the reforms in a society that pretends to the EU membership of the Union, aimed at the overlapping of democratization and Europeanization.

Besides party membership to supranational federations, typology of party families is founded also on genesis from social conflicts and political orientation of parties (Beyme). When party programmes are concerned, certain changes in some parties are becoming evident. The impact of membership in the Socialist International (and later also in PES) can most be felt in the case of the Democratic Party (DS). It started to move towards transformation 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 1997 manifesto offered a more developed

definition of the DS as a party of the centre; in the May 2001 programme the Party de-ideologized its position, while in the programme adopted in October 2001 the ideological positioning of the party was completely abandoned. With admission to the Socialist International, the Party turned towards social democracy (2007 election manifesto). Although some parties have not changed their formal programmes, the pro-European rhetoric is far more present in public appearances.

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

## **Elections 2007**

After the adoption of the Constitution of Serbia<sup>15</sup>, parliamentary elections in Serbia were called on 21 January 2007. At these elections, 20 electoral lists were submitted, with about 30 parties participating in them. Among the submitted lists, there were six minority and seven coalition lists. Electoral campaign was largely marked by European topics. There was less nationalist rhetoric while socio-economic issues were the most present. During the electoral campaign, many signals came from the EU that confirmed that Serbia has the political and economic capacities to become a member and that, with the cooperation with The Hague, the door of European integration can be opened more widely. This was confirmed by postponing presentation of the proposal for the solution of the final status of Kosovo and Metohia, commencement of visa facilitation negotiations, admission to the Partnership for Peace<sup>16</sup> and admission of the DS to the PES. The results of the elections<sup>17</sup> can be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, it can be said that the parties which participated together in the political changes of 2000 (pro-democratic and pro-European block) won a two-thirds majority. On the other hand, the anti-European SRS is individually the largest party, with 81 mandates. After three-month coalition negotiations the government is formed

<sup>15</sup> The new Constitution of Serbia was adopted on 28–29 October, 2006 on the referendum and proclaimed on 8 November 2006 in the Assembly

<sup>16</sup> “The Partnership for Peace programme is the most important institution of NATO oriented towards enforcement of trust and cooperation among member-states of NATO and other countries in the Euro-Atlantic region, aimed at development and strengthening of stability and security in Europe. Although the main task of the Partnership for Peace is cooperation in the field of defence, the character of the programme is primarily political and it is a very important factor in the security architecture of Europe” (p. 393), Četiri godine tranzicije u Srbiji (*Four years of transition in Serbia*), Begović Boris and Djilas Milica (2005), *Medjunarodni odnosi /International Relations/*, in *Četiri godine tranzicije u Srbiji*, group of authors, Centre for Liberal-Democratic Studies, Belgrade

<sup>17</sup> Election results 2007: SRS: 81; DS: 64; DSS-NS: 47; G17 Plus: 19; SPS: 16; LDP-GSS-SDU-LSDV: 15; SVM::3; List for Sandzak: 2; Roma Union of Serbia:1; Coalition of Albanians from the Presevo Valley:–1 Roma Party: 1

by DS (64) + DSS-NS (47) + G17 (19) = 130 from 250 MPs, reflecting the will of voters, formation of a majoritarian, democratic and pro-European government. Two the biggest challenges for this government are the cooperation with the Hague Tribunal and the unresolved status of Kosovo.

## Conclusion

The role of parties is to bridge the political and cultural gap and remove obstacles standing in the way of the path to Europe. It is sometimes in discrepancy with electoral calculation, as it requires also some unpopular actions, such is the cooperation with The Hague. Considering that political changes in Serbia occurred some ten years later, Europeanization of parties and party system is of smaller volume when compared with other countries in the region. During the 1990s, the dominant was the competition of Milošević's SPS and opposition on relation 'isolation nationalism – European modernism'. After the political changes of 2000, parties in Serbia do not have that many dilemmas about the European way as there are issues of dynamics and removal of obstacles standing on that way. The Hague Tribunal and the status of Kosovo are the biggest among them. Parties in Serbia disagree about these issues. When it is about programmes, the influence of the EU is obvious (DS and G17 Plus). In the field of party organization, we observe innovations related to introduction of international cooperation bodies with the DS, SPO and GSS. Influence of the Europarties is in sight, but parties in Serbia have been admitted to these party federations only recently. Serbia is still not a candidate for accession to the EU, which might have influenced that overall impact of europeanization of parties and party system is moderate.

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