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Center for the Study of Post-Yugoslav Societies (CEPYUS) founded

At the Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor, a research center, which will systematically deal with comparative analyses of political entities formed after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, has been established. Based on preliminary analyses, Center researchers note that Slovenia, in comparison with other post-Yugoslav societies, maintained its advantage through-out transition period in terms of economic development measured per capita GDP, although the advantage has not significantly increased. Compared to these societies, Slovenia's transition period constituted a significant deviation in the evolution of social value patterns.

The Senate of the Faculty of Arts has recently approved the establishment of the Center for the Study of Post-Yugoslav Societies (CEPYUS), the purpose of which is to promote research potentials in social science, in the area of the former Yugoslavia. The Center is headed by Professor Sergej Flere, who has extensive experience in the exploration of the area from before and after the collapse of the joint state.

Researchers at the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts, have carried out two research projects based on student populations in the countries and entities of former Yugoslavia. In the context of establishment of CEPYUS, they have also gathered a number of interesting information on some key social indicators for the post-Yugoslav societies.

The collected data show that Slovenia is undoubtedly the most economically developed among post-Yugoslav societies. Data on GDP per capita for the period 1989-2008 show that the development ratio has remained relatively similar to the one prior to the dissolution. In 1989, the other Yugoslav republics on average reached 40%, and in 2008 the successor states reached 42% of Slovenian GDP. Slovenia increased the gap only in comparison to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. In the 2000-2008 period Slovenia has achieved a slightly lower economic growth (36%) compared to the average growth in the region (43%). Particularly interesting is the Human Development Index data. In 1990 Yugoslavia was placed as 31st in the world while in 2007, all successor states with the exception of Slovenia (29th place), were ranked significantly lower. On average, the successor states of SFRY reached the 59th location, indicating high social costs of the disintegration of the former country.

Analyses of the results of the quantitative surveys show that Slovenia has gone at its own pace and direction, in particular with regard to values and world views. Slovenia is the only post-Yugoslav society, which has not recorded significant increase in religiosity in the transition period. On the contrary, according to some sources the religiosity of Slovenes has even dropped dramatically in this period. Similar results were found with regard to authoritarianism - a set of orientations that is inherently in contradiction to democratic orientations. The presence of this phenomenon has markedly decreased in Slovenia, while the other former republics are characterized by stagnation or even by an increase in authoritarianism, most notably Croatia. In the transition period, Slovenia also had the least traditionally oriented population in the region. At the level of core values, compared to other post-Yugoslav countries, there was a clear trend towards strengthening of the values of private sphere (family, friends, leisure, etc.) in Slovenia, while values of the public sphere declined (politics, work) throughout the transition period.

In last year's student population survey from all former republics, the Center researchers also asked whether respondents would like the nations of former Yugoslavia's to live in a united Yugoslavia again. While more than one half of respondents pronounced strong disagreement with such an idea, 27% of respondents supported it. Differences in "Yugo-nostalgia" among the countries were expected: the idea of a joint country was supported by about one half of students from FYR Macedonia and Montenegro, but only by 10% or less by students from Kosovo, Croatia and Slovenia.

CEPYUS researchers are currently preparing two international research projects on European orientations and identity in the successor states of former Yugoslavia. In the next few years, the Center would like to establish itself as one of the central social science research network for the Western Balkans area.

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