

International Seminar and Presentation of Publication

The Rise of New Political Parties in Central Europe (V4)

An international seminar connected with the introduction of the Institute for Public Affairs' (IVO) publication **Alternative Politics? The Rise of New Parties in Central Europe**, edited by Grigorij Mesežnikov, Ol'ga Gyárfášová and Zora Bútorová.

14 October 2013, 13.30 – 17.30
Academic Conference Centre, Husova 4a, Prague 1

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the introduction of pluralistic democracy in the countries of Central Europe has been accompanied by the continuous emergence of new political parties and the development of party systems. Only in recent years, however, has this topic become the subject of more intensive scholarly debate. Compared to the 1990s, the context in which it is happening today is different. First, the transformation process (in the sense of the institutionalisation and consolidation of democracy) has been de facto completed in these countries. Second, by acceding to the EU these countries became part of the common European political space. In order for us to better understand the phenomenon of new political parties, it is necessary to take into consideration this changed context and to formulate different kinds of questions than those posed hitherto.

Panel 1: The Level of the Party System

The first panel will focus on finding answers to the question of whether the emergence of new political parties in the countries of Central Europe is a reaction to the difficulties connected with the transformation process, the social impacts of radical reforms, disappointment with traditional democratic politics (becoming "tired of democracy"), or the inability of established parties to offer solutions to existing problems. With respect to the situation in the individual countries (Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Poland, Hungary), the panelists will attempt to view this phenomenon in a broader context. They will discuss whether the emergence of new parties is an inevitable consequence of the culmination of transformation processes, but will also characterise the state of the party system and the influence of new parties on its current form in individual countries, thus providing answers e.g. to the following questions:

Has the emergence of new parties threatened the stability of the party system? What are the reasons for the emergence of new parties? Are the party systems in Central Europe more volatile today than five or ten years ago? What movements have been recorded in party systems as a consequence of new parties? What are the basic characteristics of new political parties, the stated causes of their emergence, the results of their actual activity, the experience of their interaction with the "traditional" parties, their programmatic profile, the principles of their construction, their personnel background, the type of communication they use, the issues on which they work, and the political conflicts in which they have participated?

Panel 2: The Level of the Electorate

It is not possible to analyse the process of establishing new political parties as relevant components of party systems without examining their voter bases. The second panel will focus on analysing the voter bases of new parties in the individual countries of Central Europe. They will also devote attention to the issue of how the public currently view the development in society, how they evaluate the activities of political parties, and what level of trust they have in political institutions. The panelists should discuss the following questions:

What changes in voter behaviour and in their preferences have been recorded in connection with the advent of new parties? What type of voters do new parties appeal to through their "alternative" programmes? What are the sociodemographic characteristics of new parties' electorates (age, gender, education, professional profile, social status, residential structure, regional stratification, etc.)?

Programme

13.30 - 14.00	Registration
14.00 – 15.30	<u>Panel 1: The Level of the Party System</u> Grigorij Mesežnikov , Institute for Public Affairs (SK) Lukáš Linek , Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (CZ) Kristof Szombati , Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (HU) Mikołaj Cześniak , Warsaw University (PL) Moderator: Martin Bútorá , Institute for Public Affairs (SK)
15.30 – 16.00	Coffee Break
16.00 – 17.30	<u>Panel 2: The Level of the Electorate</u> Olga Gyarfášová , Institute for Public Affairs (SK) Lukáš Linek , Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (CZ) Kristof Szombati , Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (HU) Mikołaj Cześniak , Warsaw University (PL) Moderator: Martin Bútorá , Institute for Public Affairs (SK)

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