

Polity IV Country Report 2007: Serbia

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Score:</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2006</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2007</td> <td style="width: 15%;">Change</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Polity:</td> <td>8</td> <td>8</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Democ:</td> <td>9</td> <td>9</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Autoc:</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Durable:</td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tentative:</td> <td></td> <td>Yes</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Score:	2006	2007	Change	Polity:	8	8	0	Democ:	9	9	0	Autoc:	1	1	0	Durable:		1		Tentative:		Yes		
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SCODE	SER	CCODE	342	Date of Report	1 November 2008																				
Polity IV Component Variables																									
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP																				
3	3	4	7	3	4																				
Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)																									
End Date			Begin Date																						
			3 June 2006 (Ind.)																						
Polity Fragmentation: Yes, Kosovo																									
Constitution	8 November 2006																								
Executive(s)	President Boris Tadić (DS); initially directly elected June 2004; re-elected 20 January and 3 February 2008 (50.3%) Prime Minister Mirko Cvetkovic (DS); elected by National Assembly, 27 June 2008																								
Legislature	Unicameral: National Assembly (250 seats; directly elected; most recent elections, 11 May 2008) For a European Serbia alliance (Democratic Party/DS in coalition with G-17 Plus/G-17+, Serbian Renewal Movement/SPO, League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina/LSV, and Sandzak Democratic Party/SDP): 102 Serbian Radical Party (SRS): 78 Democratic Party of Serbia-New Serbia (DSS-NS): 30 Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) (in alliance with Party of United Pensioners of Serbia/PUPS and United Serbia/US): 20 Liberal Democratic Party (LDP): 13 Other parties: 7																								
Judiciary	Constitutional Court; Supreme Court																								

Narrative Description:¹

Executive Recruitment: Competitive Elections (8)

Note: Serbia is presented as the political heir to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and the Union of Serbia and Montenegro. The Republic of Serbia became an independent state on 5 June 2006 when Montenegro left the union of the two countries, known as Serbia and Montenegro (formerly the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), which was created after the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1991-92. Slobodan Milošević dominated Serbia's development between 1989, when Yugoslavia began to dissolve, until his fall from power in 2000. As President of Serbia and, later, President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Milošević led the country's Socialist Party and played a major role in the Yugoslav Wars and, most notably, the Kosovo War of 1999. Although NATO involvement and an indictment by the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) did not initially affect his popularity in Serbia, his rejection of an opposition victory in Serbia's September 2000 presidential elections sparked mass demonstrations (known as the Bulldozer Revolution) in Belgrade. After failing to secure a majority in the run-off election, Milošević initially remained defiant, but quickly realized he had lost his power base. With the state's media service taken over by militant opposition groups and the military refusing to back his continued leadership, he met with electoral opponent Vojislav Koštunica and announced defeat. Milošević was arrested on 31 March 2001 and was transferred to U.N. custody to stand trial for crimes against humanity under ICTY jurisdiction, where he died of natural causes on 11 March 2006.

Between 2001-03 Vojislav Koštunica, leader of the pro-EU Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), led the republic, and in 2003 Serbia joined Montenegro to form a loose confederation, thereby eliminating his leadership position. Following parliamentary elections for the Republic of Serbia in December 2003 in which Koštunica's party won enough seats to form a ruling minority government, Koštunica was elected prime minister on 3 March 2004. Although the fragility of his ruling coalition has occasionally threatened his position, he successfully oversaw Serbia's transition to fully independent status in 2006, and on 15 May 2007 he was sworn in for a second term, just before the deadline for forming a ruling coalition would have required new elections. The new ruling coalition comprised three EU-oriented parties: the G17 Plus bloc, the Democratic Party (DS), and the Democratic Party of Serbia-New Serbia (DSS-NS) (130 of 250 seats). The ultra-nationalist Serbia Radical Party (SRS) continued to be the majority party with 81 seats but were unable to form a ruling coalition. Presidential elections held 20 January and 3 February 2008 resulted in a very narrow victory for incumbent President Tadic. Tensions over Kosovo's declaration of independence on 17 February 2008 led to a withdrawal of Koštunica's DSS-NS party from the ruling coalition and a collapse of the government on March 13. New legislative elections were held on 11 May 2008 but resulted in only minor changes; however, Tadic's DS-led For a European Serbia alliance was able to form a coalition with the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) and some minor parties that provided it a slight majority so a new government could be formed. Mirko Cvetkovic (DS) was elected prime minister and sworn in on 7 July 2008.

Executive Constraints: Executive Parity or Subordination (7)

Serbia's 2006 Constitution provides for strong constraints on executive power in the form of a Parliament and an independent judiciary. The unicameral Parliament has 250 directly elected members and is responsible for electing the prime minister and cabinet ministers. Although the new constitution makes the president the commander-in-chief of the state's army, in practice the post is largely ceremonial. Institutional constraints on the prime minister are strong, but not nearly as influential as the fragile coalition governments that have characterized Serbia in recent years. The parliamentary elections of 21 January 2007, for example, generated a three-month constitutional crisis over the new government, with Koštunica's DSS seeking support from fellow minority parties to build a government before he could secure re-election in May. As a result of this fragile ruling coalition, Koštunica was beholden to many disparate political interests and, so, was expected to make significant compromises of his own political agenda. The coalition government led by DS Prime Minister Cvetkovic clings to an even narrower

¹ The research described in this report was sponsored by the Political Instability Task Force (PITF). The PITF is funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. The views expressed herein are the authors' alone and do not represent the views of the US Government.

majority. Divisions over the surrender of persons indicted by the International Tribunal, relations with the European Union and Russia, and, particularly, the territorial status of Kosovo have further constrained executive leadership. The courts are highly professional and demonstrate considerable autonomy from executive influence.

Political Participation: *Political Liberalization: Persistent Overt Coercion (8)*

As with the rest of former Yugoslavia, political participation in Serbia continues to be characterized by ethnic, ideological, and religious divisions. Although participation in the mainstream parties tends towards personalistic loyalties, many of the country's 342 active political parties have coalesced around specific ethnic groups, often from particular regions. The ethnic Albanian majorities in the Presevo Valley Region, for example, formed the Albanian Coalition of the Presevo Valley Region to represent them in Serbia's Parliament, winning a single seat in the 2007 general election. The largest party in the legislature has been the strongly nationalistic Serbian Radical Party (SRS); however, it has not been able to gain support from other parties to form a government. The SRS favors stronger ties with Russia and is at odds with the European Union over its stance on the internationally administered territory of Kosovo; it favors halting relations with European countries that have recognized Kosovo's 17 February 2008 declaration of independence. In contrast, the ruling coalition led by DS and its alliance For a European Serbia supports greater EU integration and, as such, has attempted to downplay the Kosovo dispute.

Serbia is strongly affected by ongoing issues regarding Kosovo and its relations with the ethnic-Albanian population in general. The declaration of independence by the Kosovo regional government and its recognition by the US and several European countries sparked mass demonstrations in Serbia and continuing agitation by nationalist groups.