

University of Zagreb
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LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND DEMOCRACY IN WESTERN BALKANS: 25 YEARS ON

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Covered area

- WB = Former Yugoslavia
- Common roots (*komunalni sistem*)
- 25 years of development



Research topics

- **Main features** of the local government system in the countries of the WB region after 25 years of independence and functioning?
- How much they have **drifted from the former** Yugoslavian **model** of local government (communal system)?
- Which **instruments of local democracy** are used in particular country (e.g. referendums, citizens' initiative, etc.) and what are experiences of cooperation of local government with civil society organisations at the local level?
- What are the **main problems** of local government and local democracy in the WB region? Are they similar in all countries of the region or completely country specific?
- Is there any need for reforms and what are the **main proposals** how to strengthen local democracy in the WB region?

Expected outcomes

- Providing wider European audience an up-to-date study on local democracy in the WB region with clear research methodology and harmonised structure
- Analyse common roots and characteristics of local government in the former Yugoslavia and development in the past 25 years
- Present results of research, comparison and analysis research topics
- Give proposals how to strengthen local democracy in the WB region which could serve as guidance for potential reform
- Establish examples of good practice when it comes to functioning of local government in the WB region in order to provide opportunities for sharing experiences among countries in the region

Points for reflection

- Size matters when talking about self-government in former YU territory!
- Weak democratic potential for establishment of strong local and regional institutions
- Statistical and administrative instead of political regionalization
- Local and regional government is still very much perceived as a threat to national sovereignty
- Regionalization is very much perceived as a precondition for utilisation of EU cohesion policy
- Regional issues are on the agenda in some countries of the region
- Some of the countries have significant ethnic groups on their territory and regionalization should be considered as possible solution for loosening potential political tensions

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Thank you!

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