



DEMOCRACY IN EUROPE: THE INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL TREATMENT OF ANTIDEMOCRATIC POLITICAL PRACTICES

The rise of extremist parties in many European countries after 1990 was a dynamic phenomenon. The collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe, starting from the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and ending in 1991 with the official dissolution of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, marked the emergence of right-wing extremist parties and their will to regain the prominence they once enjoyed in the 1930s and 1940s.

Recent developments, including the European Parliament elections of 22-25 May 2014, demonstrate that extremist groups tend to expand and consolidate their presence in the political sphere all around Europe.

This expanding phenomenon brought forth a well-known and inconvenient question. What is the appropriate reaction of a democratic regime to such “threats”: the “punitive” approach or the defence of pluralism at any cost? In the present article, as far as the institutional terrain is concerned, we will refer to two cases that emerged within the EU and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. In the legal field we will explore the rich case-law of the European Court of Human Rights regarding the legality of dismantling political parties.