

ROMANIA IN THE THIRD WAVE OF DEMOCRATIZATION

Ioan Mărginean -Bucharest University
Iuliana Precupețu – I.C.C.V.
Marius Precupețu -National School of Political
Studies and Public Administration

Following the process of democratization at the end of the World War II and after the rising of new democracies in Southern Europe (Greece, Portugal, Spain) and Latin America, "the third wave of democratization" has risen considerably the interest of researchers in understanding the new political processes developing in Central and Eastern Europe. The main question asked was related to the capacity of the new democracies to consolidate in time and attract support from their citizens. More than eleven years after the fall of communism the question still remains essential and the present paper tries to deal with several aspects of the state of democracy in Romania and its foreseeable future. The main conclusion of this endeavour is that economic difficulties do not favour democracy, but neither prevents, in an absolute manner, its edification. On the other hand, the democrat regime has certain weaknesses that make it vulnerable any time, even in the countries with developed economies. Hence the need for a continuous study of the function of democratic institutions and of the measures required to improve their performance.

Introduction

In Romania, **post-communist transition** was strongly influenced in its early period by the manner in which the political regime was changed. As it is known, the communist regime was turned out by a revolution. It started as a popular protest and protestors' repression (1,050 death) created an explosive situation all over the country, which, in a matter of days, caused the disintegration of the communist regime and of the main state institutions in the end of December 1989.

Under the conditions of the sudden removal of the former regime and of the non-existence of an organised political opposition, provisory revolutionary leading was established: the Council of the Front of National Salvation, which assumed power in the state.

The process of democracy construction and consolidation went through several significant stages (Mărginean, 1997). The first stage (1990-1991) of the state of right institution edification was more tensed. The social and political debates have degenerated into violence. This stage, however, introduced essential measures for democratisation and free elections were organised. It ended with the adoption of a new constitution by the December 1991 referendum. The shift to governing came rather late, on the third round of