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Sommario/riassunto	The chronic instability in the Balkan States of South East Europe has prevented the end of the Cold War becoming an era of genuine peace in Europe. Against a background of competing nationalisms, economic decline, the resilience of authoritarianism, it is easy to forget that there have been experiments with democracy have taken place since 1990 with relative success. Now, for the first time, the region is genuinely engaging with open politics; its outcome will determine whether the Balkans can cease being a byword for instability, and an area whose shock-waves have disturbed the peace of Europe.