

# Journal of Contemporary European Research

Volume 11, Issue 4 (2015)

Commentary

## Exploring the 'faces' of Europeanization from an Albanian perspective

**Irma Spahiu** *Osgoode Hall Law School*

### **Citation**

Spahiu, I. (2015). 'Exploring the "faces" of Europeanization from an Albanian perspective', *Journal of Contemporary European Research*. 11 (4), pp. 346-358.

First published at: [www.jcer.net](http://www.jcer.net)

## Abstract

Europeanization is a process that exists in all prospective members of the European Union (EU). One such country is Albania, which has long been stagnating in its attempts to join the EU. This commentary explores Olsen's faces of Europeanization by observing how this process has materialised in Albanian politics and governance. It also sheds light on Europeanization approaches by studying the EU candidate countries in the Balkans aiming to look for similar or distinguishable patterns in countries where Europeanization has taken place. The commentary contends that Europeanization in Albania is occurring according to some unique features, which are labelled as 'Europeanization by convenience'.

## Keywords

Europeanization; integration; EU accession; conditionality; institutions

---

### UNDERSTANDING EUROPEANIZATION

The meaning of 'Europeanization' is surrounded by considerable conceptual contestation. Most of the definitions look at the term as a process which induces changes to political structures. One of the earliest definitions is offered by Robert Ladrech (1994) who describes Europeanization as 'an incremental process of reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the extent that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy making' (1994: 69). Similarly, Robert Harmsen and Thomas Wilson (2000) define Europeanization as 'the emergence and development at the European level of distinct structures of governance, that is, of political, legal and social institutions ... specializing in the creation of authoritative European rules' (2000: 14). Maarten Vink and Paolo Graziano (2007) introduced EU integration at the definition of Europeanization, referring to it as a process of domestic adaptation to European regional integration (2007: 7). A more complete definition of Europeanization, which encapsulates processes, structures and actors is offered by Frank Schimmelfenning and Ulrich Sedelmeier (2005). According to them, Europeanization is 'a process in which states adopt EU rules that cover a broad range of formal and informal issues and structures. This means the transposition of the EU law into domestic law, the restructuring of domestic institutions according to the EU rules; or the change of domestic political practices according to the EU standards' (2005: 7). For a better understanding of the processes induced by Europeanization I refer to the work of Johan Olsen (2002) who unpacks the term as being applied in a number of ways to describe processes of change (Olsen 2002: 921) He labels them the 'faces of Europeanization' and describes them through five changes: the first change relates to the expansion of territorial boundaries through which Europe becomes a single political space; the second identifies the development of institutions of governance at the European level; the third depicts the penetration of national and sub-national systems of governance, involving a division of responsibilities and powers between the different levels of governance; the fourth describes the export forms of European political organization and governance beyond the European territory; and the fifth conveys the political project aimed at achieving a unified and politically stronger Europe.

## THEORIZING EUROPEANIZATION THROUGH 'RATIONALIST INSTITUTIONALISM'

Rational choice approaches have produced progressive research on Europeanization (Pollack 2006: 31), because they explain the effect of the EU membership on the new member states. Börzel and Risse suggested that Europeanization is theorised in terms of two distinct mechanisms, rational choice emphasising a logic of consequences, and sociological institutionalism emphasising a logic of appropriateness (2000: 41). Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier tested rationalist institutionalism on the effects of EU membership on the new member states in Central and Eastern Europe (2005: 50). They previously found that 'in the rationalist account, international organizations are instrumental associations designed to help states pursue their interests more efficiently' (2002: 509). Rationalist theories (see March and Olsen 1989) conceive international organizations as [...] voluntary groups whose 'members would not join unless a net gain resulted from membership' (Sandler and Tschirhart 1980: 1491). According to this logic, expected individual costs and benefits determine the applicants' and the member states' enlargement preferences. A potential state will seek to join the EU if it will benefit from enlargement.

## EUROPEANIZATION IN THE BALKANS AND ALBANIA

Europeanization is often used interchangeably with European integration because it affects both member states and candidate countries. There are currently five countries with candidate country status in the EU: Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey (European Commission 2015). For many Western Balkan countries, Europeanization and integration have taken place concurrently, accompanied by a strong urge for democratization. They have gone through all three processes at the same time after the collapse of communism in their efforts to build their democratic states. However, the case of Albania is seen as unique (Bogdani and Loughlin 2007: 23), because its path to democratization has been scarred by one of the worst communist regimes in the world (US Government 1996: 19). Albania stands out from the Western Balkans (European Stability Initiative 2014) because of the total isolation of the country under the totalitarian regime and the absolute disavowal of any human rights discourse, including the removal of any forms of religion and private property. Evan Tomaš argued that 'Albania was the most isolated of all the communist countries in Europe with arguably the most brutal regime' (2014: 116). This painful communist past has defined the Albanian approach to democratization. According to Elda Ah-Pine, '[t]he democratization process in Albania is one of the most difficult ones given its tumultuous historical legacy, its difficult economic situation and above all, given its extreme domestic political polarization' (2011: 2). Ah-Pine explained the Albanian peculiarity with the total isolation of the country for decades and the real paranoia of political freedom, which left a legacy of 'political passivity' among Albanians. During communism, Albania had in place a hypocritical electoral system, where there was a right to vote with only one political party to 'choose' from (2011: 6).

In addition, Europeanization is often linked with transformation and regime change. Explaining the Europeanization of the Balkan countries, Othon Anastasakis refers to the 'Eastern Style Europeanization' as a process of deep transformation and modernization of economies, politics and societies (2005: 79). The transformation and regime change from communism to democracy happened simultaneously with Europeanization for them. They developed in a uniquely distinguished way, which Anastasakis identifies as 'Eastern Style'. Schimmelfennig further debates on the legal transformation when stating that '[i]n the case of quasi-members and candidate countries, it is clear that the transfer of the *acquis communautaire* is at the core of Europeanization' (2012: 5). Attempting to find a transformation model in the Balkan countries, Tamara Radovanovik (2012) noticed that the transformation of these countries has occurred while trying to bypass the Balkanization process. 'Since the fall of communism in the 1990s, the Western Balkans have been undergoing fundamental and multiple transformations that are complex in their nature and uneasy

to be explained by a single paradigm or model' (Radovanovik 2012: 208). Indeed, the Balkans have transformed territorially, politically and socially.

Furthermore, Europeanization is in many cases equated to the process of EU accession. Heather Grabbe emphasized '...the impact of the EU accession process on national patterns of governance' (2001: 1014), and recognized the EU conditionality as a Europeanizing force in the accession of applicants. All the Balkan countries have entered in negotiations with the EU for future membership, but have made distinguishable progress regarding their status. (see Table 1 for the status of these countries with the EU).

*Table 1. EU Status of the Balkan countries*

|                   | SAA <sup>1</sup><br>initialled | SAA<br>signed | SAA<br>Enters<br>into<br>force | Application<br>for<br>membership | Commission's<br>opinion | Candidate<br>status<br>granted | Start of<br>accession<br>negotiations                    |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Albania</b>    | 2003                           | 2006          | 2009                           | 2009                             | 2010                    | 2014                           | -                                                        |
| <b>Croatia</b>    | 2000                           | 2001          | 2005                           | 2003                             | 2004                    | 2004                           | <b>2004</b><br><b>(joined on 1</b><br><b>July, 2013)</b> |
| <b>BH</b>         | 2007                           | 2008          | -                              | -                                | -                       | -                              | -                                                        |
| <b>Macedonia</b>  | 2000                           | 2001          | 2004                           | 2004                             | 2005                    | 2005                           | -                                                        |
| <b>Montenegro</b> | 2006                           | 2007          | 2010                           | 2008                             | 2010                    | 2010                           | <b>29 June 2012</b>                                      |
| <b>Serbia</b>     | <b>2007</b>                    | <b>2008</b>   | <b>2013</b>                    | <b>2009</b>                      | <b>2011</b>             | <b>2011</b>                    | -                                                        |

Source: Balfour & Stratulat 2011: 8.<sup>2</sup>

Albania and other Western Balkan countries were recognised as potential countries for EU membership in 2003 at the Thessaloniki Summit (European Commission 2003). The EU refused candidate status to Albania three times from 2009 to 2013, until granting it in June 2014 (European Commission 2014a) despite Britain, Germany and France expressing reluctance (Thomas 2014). Albania still needed to meet key priorities, with particular focus on administration and judiciary reform, the fight against corruption and organised crime and fundamental rights (European Commission 2014b).

As in all EU enlargement processes, all the Balkan countries are subject to EU conditions for membership, among them democratic conditionality. According to Isa Camyar (2010), conditionality has a coercive nature. Adopting a 'Rationalist Institutionalism' approach, it can be noted that the EU's influence on candidate countries follows a logic of consequences where domestic institutions are the main factors impeding or facilitating changes in response to EU adjustment pressures. They act rationally by complying to these pressures for fear of consequences if they were to act otherwise. It is by using this logic that conditionality can be seen as Europeanization's coercive feature. However, for conditionality to work, it is important that it is also persuasive and considered legitimate. 'If a candidate country [...] positively identifies with the EU, or holds it in high regard, the

government is more likely to be open to persuasion and to consider the rules that the EU promotes as legitimate and appropriate' (Sedelmeier 2011: 16). Sociological institutionalism helps to explain this behavior according to a logic of appropriateness. Hence, a logic of consequences is not always the only logic that illuminates the processes of Europeanization.

There are concerns about conditionality related to post-accession. After a country joins the EU it may risk stagnation in the Europeanization process, if not regression. Sedelmeier strongly argues that '[t]he finding that conditionality – the external incentive of membership – was the key mechanism that led to the adoption of EU rules by the candidates make the question of post-accession compliance more salient' (2011: 25). Addressing the same concern, Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier engage in an analysis of the EU's influence in candidate countries, which 'has resulted primarily from the external incentives of accession conditionality rather than social learning or lesson-drawing' (2005: 9).

Regarding the public's perception in the Balkans, one can notice that '[p]eople of the region [...] strongly support the EU integration of their countries' (Keil and Arkan 2015: 238). In 2009, data from the Gallup Balkan Monitor revealed that people in the Balkans were in favour of their country joining the EU, varying from 63 per cent in Serbia to 93 per cent in Albania (2010: 7). Albanians were 'among the most optimistic among potential new members in the Balkans – on average, they believed that their country would join in 2014' (2010: 10). It is now a fact that Albania is far from reaching that objective.

Looking for the reasons behind this 'EU obsession', Alina Mungiu-Pippidi observes:

The Eastern Balkan publics wanted to join Europe, [...] due to increasing poverty [...] Europe was, therefore, needed as much for its money as for regime legitimacy and security ... After securing domestic domination (in business as well as the judicial system and politics), communist successor parties in Romania, Bulgaria and Albania made European accession their next important objective (2010: 68).

GDP data helps to demonstrate the level of poverty, in which Albania continues to be trapped in. According to Global Finance<sup>3</sup>, in 2015, Albania was the second poorest country in the region with a GDP of \$11,689, coming after Bosnia and Hercegovina (\$10,360). Countries of similar size, such as Montenegro and Macedonia, were having a much higher GDP.

Another problem in the Balkans is the political environment, which has serious problems with market institutions, administrative capacities and the rule of law. Mungiu-Pippidi writes about the 'unfinished transformations' (2011: 61-67). The region is still experiencing deep transformation of political institutions, administrative culture, and some territorial changes. In their analysis of the Albanian integration, Bogdani and Loughlin concluded that 'Albania is far from a fully democratic system' (2007: 85). The authors found that:

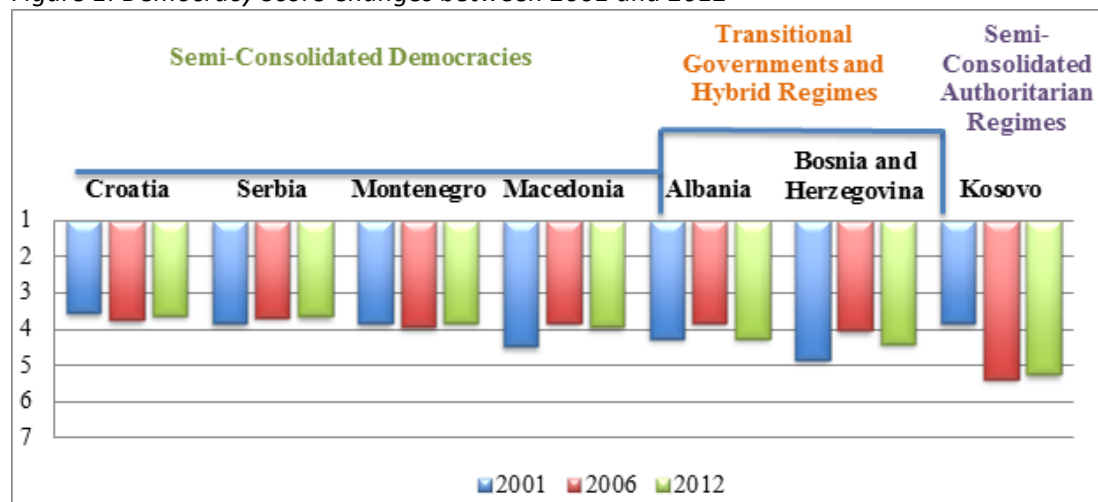
[t]he political and economic system of Albania established after the onset of democracy has ... been faulty and problematic... it is poor, incompetent and irresponsible political leadership which has been the principal factor that has prevented Albania achieving good results in its attempted reforms (2007: 30).

After many years of experiencing democracy, the situation in Albania has not changed much. To understand this situation, this commentary provides some data on the scores of different indicators of democracy. The data is very useful for shedding some light on the scholarly findings.

## THE “FACES” OF ALBANIAN EUROPEANIZATION

Europeanization is also related to other processes, such as state-building and democratization, or judiciary reform, fight against corruption, organised crime and fundamental rights. The following data demonstrates how Albania and other Balkan countries are doing in terms of all these processes. Albania improved in 2006, but deteriorated in 2012.

Figure 1: Democracy Score Changes between 2001 and 2012



Source: Nations in Transit (NIT) 2002, NIT 2007, and NIT 2013.4

Table 2: Albanian Democracy Averaged Scores 2005-2014

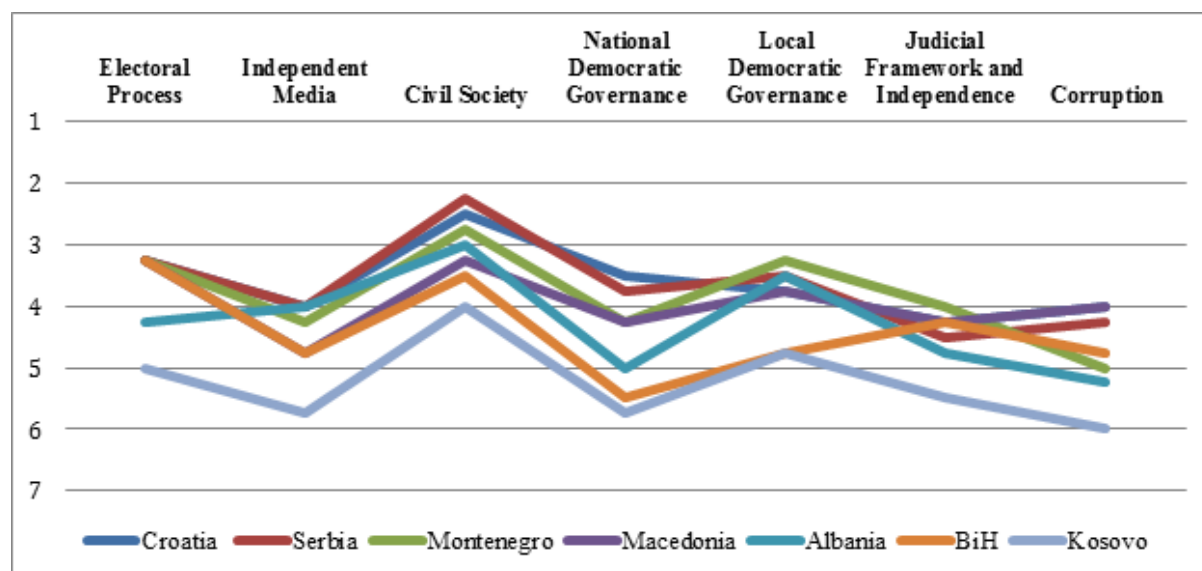
|                                     | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Electoral Process                   | 3.75 | 3.50 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 3.75 | 3.75 | 4.00 | 4.25 | 4.25 | 4.00 |
| Civil Society                       | 3.25 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 3.00 |
| Independent Media                   | 4.00 | 3.75 | 3.75 | 3.75 | 3.75 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 |
| National Democratic Governance      | 4.25 | 4.00 | 4.25 | 4.25 | 4.25 | 4.50 | 4.75 | 4.75 | 5.00 | 4.75 |
| Local Democratic Governance         | 3.25 | 2.75 | 2.75 | 2.75 | 2.75 | 3.00 | 3.25 | 3.25 | 3.50 | 3.50 |
| Judicial Framework and Independence | 4.50 | 4.25 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.25 | 4.25 | 4.25 | 4.75 | 4.75 | 4.75 |
| Corruption                          | 5.25 | 5.25 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.25 | 5.25 |
| Democracy Score                     | 4.04 | 3.79 | 3.82 | 3.82 | 3.82 | 3.93 | 4.04 | 4.14 | 4.25 | 4.18 |

Source: World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2014*<sup>5</sup>

Table 2 gives data on the democracy score for Albania from 2005 to 2014, which has slightly decreased.

Figure 2 represents the democracy score comprised by performance on seven different categories of democracy. Albania scores better in civil society, but not in the electoral process, national democratic governance or corruption.

Figure 2: Democratic Performance by Category



Source: NIT 2013.

Table 3 shows rate changes of all the data. Albania has no sign of improvement for any of the performance categories in four years.

Table 3: Rating Changes between 2008 and 2012

|                                     | Croatia | Sebia | Montenegro | Macedonia | Albania | BH  | Kosovo |
|-------------------------------------|---------|-------|------------|-----------|---------|-----|--------|
| Electoral Process                   | =       | =     | =          | ↑         | ↓↓↓     | ↓   | ↓↓↓    |
| Independent Media                   | ↓       | ↓     | ↓↓↓        | ↓↓↓       | ↓       | ↓   | ↓      |
| Civil Society                       | ↑       | ↑↑↑   | =          | =         | =       | =   | =      |
| National Democratic Governance      | ↓       | ↑     | =          | ↓         | ↓↓↓     | ↓↓↓ | ↓↓↓    |
| Local Democratic Governance         | =       | ↑     | =          | =         | ↓↓↓     | =   | ↑↑↑    |
| Judicial Framework and Independence | =       | =     | ↑          | ↓         | ↓↓↓     | ↓   | ↑      |
| Corruption                          | ↑↑↑     | ↑     | =          | ↑         | ↓       | ↓   | ↓      |

Source: NIT 2009 and NIT 2013

↑: 0.25 improvement; =: status quo; ↓: 0.25 decline.

Table 4 uses another index, Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). Albania is ranked the lowest in the region (113).

*Table 4: Corruption Perception Index*

|            | 2012     | 2011     | 2010     | 2009     | 2008     | 2007     | 2006      |
|------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Rank       |          |          |          |          |          |          |           |
| (score)    |          |          |          |          |          |          |           |
| Macedonia  | 69 (4.3) | 69 (3.9) | 62 (4.1) | 71 (3.8) | 72 (3.6) | 84 (3.3) | 105 (2.7) |
| B&H        | 72 (4.2) | 91 (3.2) | 91(3.2)  | 99(3)    | 92 (3.2) | 84 (3.3) | 93 (2.9)  |
| Serbia     | 80 (3.9) | 86 (3.3) | 78 (3.5) | 83 (3.5) | 85 (3.4) | 79 (3.4) | 90 (3.0)  |
| Albania    | 113(3.3) | 95 (3.1) | 87(3.3)  | 95 (3.2) | 85 (3.4) | 105(2.9) | 111(2.6)  |
| Montenegro | 75 (4.1) | 66 (4)   | 69 (3.7) | 69 (3.9) | 85 (3.4) | 84 (3.3) | N/A       |
| Croatia    | 62 (4.6) | 66(4)    | 62(4.1)  | 66(4.1)  | 62(4.4)  | 64(4.1)  | N/A       |

Source: Transparency International CPI<sup>6</sup>

The empirical data and the debates on Europeanization help to explore the faces of Europeanization more closely. The first of five changes in the process of Europeanization, according to Olsen, relates to the expansion of the EU territorial boundaries. The EU's commitment to enlargement has been positive, at least until relatively recently. This commitment has its rationale by reason of economic dominance and political power, but also, on the enormous stake in the stability of the region (Noutcheva 2009: 1069). Despite the Ukraine conflict, which has highlighted the dangers of eastwards enlargement, another enlargement benefit (at least for the Western Balkans) is still that it 'makes Europe a safer place... Current enlargement policy is reinforcing peace and stability in the Western Balkans and promoting recovery and reconciliation after the wars of the 1990s' (European Commission 2014: 3). The OSCE presence in Albania has confirmed the safety concern by noting that 'the objectives of the EU concerning the Albanian integration are more about security and stability targets in the region rather than checking that the state builds the political system in accordance with European rule' (Ah-Pine 2011: 15). Developments such as reviving the 'Great Albania', which aspires to bring Kosovo and Albania together, may pose stability threats. If this were to happen, conflict might occur because of territorial claims involving Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Greece. These developments can be kept under control if the Balkans are integrated into the EU.

However, there is some stagnation in the enlargement process due to public pressure (Toshkov, Kortenska, Dimitrova, and Fagan 2014). Opinion polls exhibit rising scepticism among EU citizens towards further enlargement. In spring 2013, 53 per cent of EU citizens opposed enlargement (European Commission 2013a). After the 2008 economic crisis and recently the Greek collapse, enlargement has become highly contested. The result is mutual distrust or pretense: 'We pretend we want you, and you pretend you're getting ready' (Rupnik 2011: 28). Soeren Keil warns about the danger of 'enlargement-fatigue', which may 'contribute to further alienation between the EU and



the Western Balkan countries' (2013: 352). Faced with persistent hurdles in the region, EU member states have stopped promoting the Balkan enlargement and begun to show cold feet on the enlargement policy (CSES 2014: 7). This situation creates what Jacques Rupnik labels as 'accession fatigue' for the aspiring members who may get tired of waiting. An 'enlargement fatigue' within the EU risks meeting an 'accession fatigue' in the Balkans. These two conditions question the whole process of membership in Albania.

Olsen's second change, the development of institutions at the EU level, does not apply to Albania as a non-member. The third change is the adaption of national and subnational systems to the EU and of EU norms to the domestic systems. Albania and other Balkan countries do not have the power or the position to dictate any rules to the EU. However, 'the weaker partners are also in a position to affect the course of their Europeanization via the introduction of new EU principles and practices emanating from their particularities' (Anastasakis 2005: 83). For instance, when Albania requested candidate status in 2010, the European Commission outlined twelve key priorities (2010: 2). Albania did not comply with all twelve priorities and was denied candidate status. In the 2013 request, priorities were focused on five instead of twelve indicators, namely: reform of the judiciary, fight against corruption, protection of human rights and administration reform, the rule of law, and fundamental rights (European Commission 2013b). The reduction of the number of priorities is a sign of some relief from the EU and demonstrates that negotiations did consider the country's particularities. As the poorest country in the Balkans with one of the toughest communist regimes in the world, Albania could only adapt the EU rules incrementally and with some variation.

One further change relates to exporting forms of EU political governance beyond the EU territory through conditionality. It is obvious that conditionality is the dominant mechanism of EU influence. However, 'the EU no longer solely focuses on the Copenhagen criteria...but also on the consolidation of statehood in the region, both external (state borders) and internal (autonomous governance)' (Noutcheva 2012: 2). Satisfying this type of conditionality makes export EU governance beyond the EU territory more difficult. The adoption of the legal norms of the *acquis communautaire* should not be a literal approximation of legal text, but an approximation of standards (Daci 2008: 15). The tables above demonstrate that Albania is not making progress in meeting the EU standards. But why are other Balkan countries performing better than Albania, although they entered the Europeanization process at the same time, if not later? As explained by the 'Eastern Style Europeanization', in order to enter successfully the Europeanization process a country should be 'transition ready', and Albania is still experiencing an ongoing transformation within its political institutions and is not transition ready.

There is a striking dichotomy in the Albanian Europeanization versus those of other Balkan candidates. On the one hand, Albanian political elites suffer from incompetency and poor leadership - data shows that they have performed worse than any other Balkan country. At the same time, Albanian citizens have aspired to join the EU for long, and as data shows, more than any other Balkan country. Albanian politicians have taken advantage of people's aspirations by playing with the EU membership card. The Europeanization process in Albania has been following a pattern that it is here labelled as 'Europeanization by convenience' – using the process to gain the popular vote. Political institutions in Albania follow the logic of consequences - they follow the rules of conditionality to the point of not risking their negotiations with the EU and not disappointing their electorate. As such, Europeanization turns into a means of convenience – it keeps EU negotiations on, by not failing the basic requirements, but also serves as a 'strategy' to win elections. As data shows, Albanian politicians are not utterly committed to responding adequately to all EU adjustment pressures, thus, making only cosmetic adjustments without any substantive change on the Albanian political governance.

The final change relates to the political project for a stronger Europe. For this project to be successful, a re-evaluation of all policies for the EU enlargement in the Balkans is required. Keil and

Arkan observe that 'the EU has never been involved in candidate countries as much as it currently is in the Western Balkans states' (2015: 235) causing longer pre-accession time and tighter standards. This may have consequences for the EU's political project as '[t]he more the goal of EU accession resembles a moving and elusive target, the more likely it is to hinder the commitment of Balkan political leaders to Brussels-demanded reforms, as well as the support of the Balkan people for European integration' (CSES 2014: 9). This leads to 'accession fatigue'. Dieter Fuch and Edeltraud Roller argue that the experience with the countries of the Eastern Europe made the EU more vigilant with new membership because '[g]iven the difficulties of transformation processes and the lack of democratic tradition, [...] once countries [...] become members of the EU, a resulting destabilizing effect cannot be excluded' (2006: 71). This has led to an 'enlargement fatigue'. Rupnik suggests that the Balkans needs the EU to reconsider its approach to enlargement, which cannot simply replicate the pattern so successfully applied in Central Europe. [...], but requires the EU to overcome the hesitation between containment and integration and to renew its commitment to the Balkan's European future in order to restore its credibility regionally and internationally (2011: 30). Keil and Arkan reinforce the idea that 'it is time for the EU to think about a plan B [...]' (2015: 238). Considering that Europe is still experiencing economic difficulties, and given the Albanian performance on conditionality, it is difficult to predict how Europeanization will proceed in Albania. If the Albanian political class will not overcome using Europeanization as an instrument for political reasons, perspectives on EU accession loom large in the short term.

## CONCLUSION

Europeanization in the Balkans demonstrates similar and distinctive patterns. In Albania, there is an interesting configuration. On the one hand, the EU has used Europeanization more rationally (as a strategy for stability in the region) than normatively (to induce domestic change). On the other hand, Europeanization has been used instrumentally in an 'Albanian fashioned-way' without substantive domestic changes of Albanian politics and governance. 'Europeanization by convenience' has brought about merely cosmetic adjustments to respond to EU conditionality. For Albania, EU accession is more an 'obsession' than about social learning or lesson drawing.

Following the recent economic challenges in Europe, the EU needs to rethink its approach to enlargement. The Europeanization of the Balkans requires the EU to overcome the hesitation between containment and enlargement, which deeply affects its commitment to the Balkans' European future, in order to avoid a Europeanization fatigue. The dichotomy 'enlargement fatigue' and 'accession fatigue' may have major implications for the future of EU integration. Certainly '[t]he integration of the Western Balkans into the EU has the potential to become the single most successful foreign policy achievement of the Union' (Keil 2013: 344). The future of Europeanization profoundly depends on the engagement of all parties involved in this ongoing process.

\*\*\*

### Correspondence address

Irma Spahiu, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University, 4700 Keele Street, North York, ON M3J 1P3, Toronto, Canada [IrmaSpahiu@Osgoode.yorku.ca]

---

<sup>1</sup> Stabilization and Association Agreement

<sup>2</sup> Rosa Balfour and Corina Stratulat, The democratic transformation of the Balkans, European Policy Centre, Issue Paper No.66, November 2011, at 8. Available at:

[http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub\\_1363\\_the\\_democratic\\_transformation\\_of\\_the\\_balkans.pdf](http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub_1363_the_democratic_transformation_of_the_balkans.pdf) Updated by the author from [http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/index_en.htm)

<sup>3</sup> Global Finance, Country Data. Available at <https://www.gfmag.com/global-data/country-data/>

<sup>4</sup> 1 represents the highest level of democratic progress. Available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/blog/democratic-scorecard-western-balkans#.VCQrqfldXZ8>

<sup>5</sup> 1 represents the highest level of democratic progress. Available at [http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/nationstransit/2014/albania#.VCQ17\\_IdXZ8](http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/nationstransit/2014/albania#.VCQ17_IdXZ8)

<sup>6</sup> The score indicates the perceived level of public sector corruption, 0 means that a country is perceived as highly corrupt. The rank indicates a country's position relative to the other countries.

### REFERENCES

Ah-Pine, E. N. (2011). Albanian Integration into the UE: Security, Europeanization, democratization: which project for the democracy? ECPR, Reykjavik. Available at: <[https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/file/index/docid/696370/filename/Albanian\\_integration\\_into\\_the\\_UE.pdf](https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/file/index/docid/696370/filename/Albanian_integration_into_the_UE.pdf)> [Accessed 13 October 2015].

Anastasakis, O. (2005). The Europeanization of the Balkans. *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, 12(1): 77-88.

Bogdani, M. and Loughin, J. (2007). Albania and the European Union: the tumultuous journey towards integration and accession. New York: I.B. Tauris.

Börzel, T. A. and Risse, T. (2000). 'When Europeanization hits home: Europeanization and domestic change'. *European Integration Online Papers (EIoP)* 4(15). Available at: < <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/pdf/2000-015.pdf> > [Accessed 1 December 2015].

Camyar, I. (2010). Europeanization, Domestic Legacies and Administrative Reforms in Central and Eastern Europe: A Comparative Analysis of Hungary and the Czech Republic. *European Integration*, 32(2): 137–155.

Centre for Southeast European Studies (CSES) (2014). Balkans in Europe Policy Advisory Group: The Unfulfilled Promise: Completing the Balkan Enlargement, Policy Paper, May 2014. Available at: <<http://balkanfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Policy-Paper-Completing-Enlargement-2.pdf>> [Accessed 3 May 2015].

Daci, J. (2008). The European Integration of the Albanian system, International Conference on Balkans Studies: ICBS. pp 13-24. Available at: <<http://www.brrln.org/uploads/documents/28/ICBS2008%20The%20European%20integration%20of%20the%20Albanian%20legal%20system.pdf>> [Accessed 25 September 2015].

European Commission (2003). EU-Western Balkans Summit. Thessaloniki Declaration. Available at: <[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_PRES-03-163\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_PRES-03-163_en.htm)> [Accessed 3 May 2015].

European Commission (2015). *European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations*. Available at: <[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/check-current-status/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/check-current-status/index_en.htm)> [Accessed 25 September 2015].

European Commission (2014a). EU candidate status for Albania. Available at: <[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/albania/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/albania/index_en.htm)> [Accessed 12 October 2015].

European Commission (2014b). *Memo/14/439, EU candidate status for Albania*. Available at: <[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-14-439\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-439_en.htm)> [Accessed 12 October 2015].

European Commission (2014). COM(2014) 700 Final Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2014-15. Available at: <[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2014/20141008-strategy-paper\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2014/20141008-strategy-paper_en.pdf)> [Accessed 1 May 2015].

European Commission (2013a). *Standard Eurobarometer, No. 79, Spring, T84*. 2013 Available at: <[http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/eb/eb79/eb79\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb79/eb79_en.htm)> [Accessed 19 February 2015].

European Commission (2013b). *MEMO/13/888, Key findings of the 2013 Progress Report on Albania*. Available at: <[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-13-888\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-888_en.htm)> [Accessed 12 October 2015].

European Commission (2010). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: Commission Opinion on Albania's application for membership of the European Union. p.2. Available at: <<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0680:FIN:EN:PDF>> [Accessed 12 October 2015].

European Stability Initiative (2014). *Albania*. Available at: <<http://www.esiweb.org/index.php?lang=en&id=254>> [Accessed May 3, 2015].

Fuchs, D. and Roller, E. (2006). Learned Democracy? Support of Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. *International Journal of Sociology*, 36(3): 70-96.

Gallup Balkan Monitor (2010). Insights and Perceptions: Voices of the Balkans-2010 Summary of findings. Available at: <[http://www.balkan-monitor.eu/files/BalkanMonitor-2010\\_Summary\\_of\\_Findings.pdf](http://www.balkan-monitor.eu/files/BalkanMonitor-2010_Summary_of_Findings.pdf)> [Accessed 15 October 2015].

Grabbe, H. (2001). How Does Europeanisation Affect CEE Governance? Conditionality, Diffusion and Diversity. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 8(6): 1013-1031.

Graziano, P. and Vink, M. (2007). Challenges of a New Research Agenda. In Graziano, P. and Vink, M. (eds) *Europeanization: New Research Agendas*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan: 3-23.

Harmsen, R. and Wilson, T. M. (2000). Introduction: Approaches to Europeanization. In *Yearbook of European Studies*, 14: 13-26.

Keil, S. and Arkan, Z. (2015). Theory and practice of EU member state building in the Western Balkans. In S. Keil and Z. Arkan (eds) *The EU and Member State Building: European Foreign Policy in the Western Balkans*. New York: Routledge: 15-31.

Keil, S. (2013). Introduction to special issue: Europeanization, state-building and democratization in the Western Balkans. *Nationalities Papers*, 41(3): 343-353.

Ladrech, R. (1994). Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: The case of France. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 32 (1): 69-88.

March, J. G. and Olsen, J. P. (1989). *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics*. New York: Free Press.

Mungiu-Pippidi, A. (2010). When Europeanization meets transformation: Lessons from the Unfinished Eastern European Revolutions. In V. Bunce, M. McFaul, and K. Stoner-Weiss (eds). *Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Post-communist World*. New York: Cambridge University Press: 59-81.

Noutcheva, G. (2012). *European Foreign Policy and the Challenges of the Balkan Accession*. New York: Routledge.

Noutcheva, G. (2009). Fake, partial and imposed compliance: the limits of the EU's normative power in the Western Balkans. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 17(7): 1065-1084.

Olsen, J. P. (2002). The Many Faces of Europeanization. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 40(5): 921-52.

Pollack, M. A. (2006). Rational Choice and EU politics. In K. E. Jorgensen, M. A. Pollack and B. Rosamond (eds) *Handbook of European Union Politics*. London: SAGE: 31-57.

Radovanovik, T. (2012). From 'Balkanization' to 'Europeanization' of the Western Balkan countries. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 2(4): 207-214.

Rupnik, J. (2011). The Western Balkans and the EU: 'the hour of Europe'. Chaillot papers, N°126. Available at: <[http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/cp126-The\\_Western\\_Balkans\\_and\\_the\\_EU.pdf](http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/cp126-The_Western_Balkans_and_the_EU.pdf)> [Accessed 16 October 2015].

Sandler, T. and Tschirhart, J. T. (1980). The economic theory of clubs: an evaluative survey. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 18(4): 1481–1521.

Schimmelfennig, F. and Sedelmeier, U. (2005). Introduction: Conceptualizing the Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe. In F. Schimmelfennig and U. Sedelmeier (eds). *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press: 1–28.

Schimmelfennig, F. (2012). Europeanization beyond member states. *Living Reviews in European Governance*, 7(1): 1-31. Available at: < <http://europeangovernance-livingreviews.org/Articles/lreg-2012-1/download/lreg-2012-1Color.pdf>> [Accessed 5 October 2015].

Schimmelfennig, F. and Sedelmeier, U. (2002). Theorising EU enlargement: research focus, hypotheses, and the state of research. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 9(4): 500–528.

Sedelmeier, U. (2011). Europeanisation in new member and candidate states. *Living Reviews in European Governance*, 6(1): 1-52. Available at: < <http://europeangovernance-livingreviews.org/Articles/lreg-2011-1/download/lreg-2011-1Color.pdf>> [Accessed 12 October 2015].

Tomáš, E. (2014). *Chapters of European Economic History*. Praha: Karolinum Press.

Thomas, K. (2014). EU to grant Albania 'candidate' status. EurActiv. Available at: <<http://www.euractiv.com/sections/enlargement/eu-grant-albania-candidate-status-303071>> [Accessed 14 October 2015].

Toshkov, D., Kortenska, E., Dimitrova, A. and Fagan, A. (2014). The 'Old' and the 'New' Europeans: Analyses of Public Opinion on EU Enlargement in Review. *Maximizing the integration capacity of the European Union: Lessons of and prospects for enlargement and beyond*. MAXCAP Working Paper Series, No. 02, April 2014. Available at [http://maxcap-project.eu/system/files/maxcap\\_wp\\_02.pdf](http://maxcap-project.eu/system/files/maxcap_wp_02.pdf) [Accessed 25 September 2015]

US Government (1996). Challenges to Democracy in Albania: Hearing before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, One hundred Fourth Congress, Second Session, March 14, 1996. Washington: US Government Printing Office. Available at: <<https://archive.org/stream/challengestodemo00unit#page/n0/mode/2up>> [Accessed 3 May 2015].