

ALBANIAN TRANSITION: WHAT IS NOT WORKING WITH ALBANIAN DEMOCRATIZATION?

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Abstract

Since the beginning of the 1990s, all ex-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe engaged in an agenda of European integration process. For some of them such as Czech Republic, Slovenia, or Poland, this process was successfully accomplished after meeting the Copenhagen criteria and they are now part of European Union. On the contrary, Albania is considered to be a “transitional democracy” or “partly free state”. The Copenhagen membership criteria require that the candidate state which is applying for EU membership, in this case Albania, must have “the proper institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities: a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union; the ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic & monetary union”. That means that the crucial criterion for a country to proceed in the integration process is the established democracy and the rule of law. Starting from the assumption that democratization is a process of combined exogenous and endogenous factor, I think that the lack of political dialogue and the unwillingness to cooperate for the necessary reforms among parties and the absence of free and fair elections are the crucial problems in the European process of integration of the country. It means that democracy has not because the “only game in town”. On one hand we have the international community and especially EU which is pushing toward democracy through EU conditionality and on the other hand we have the political elite which are trying to take the power with any means. EU conditionality in Albania is the same that it was in Bulgaria before the accession to EU. Taking the EU conditionality as unchanged variable, what is not working in Albanian context?

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