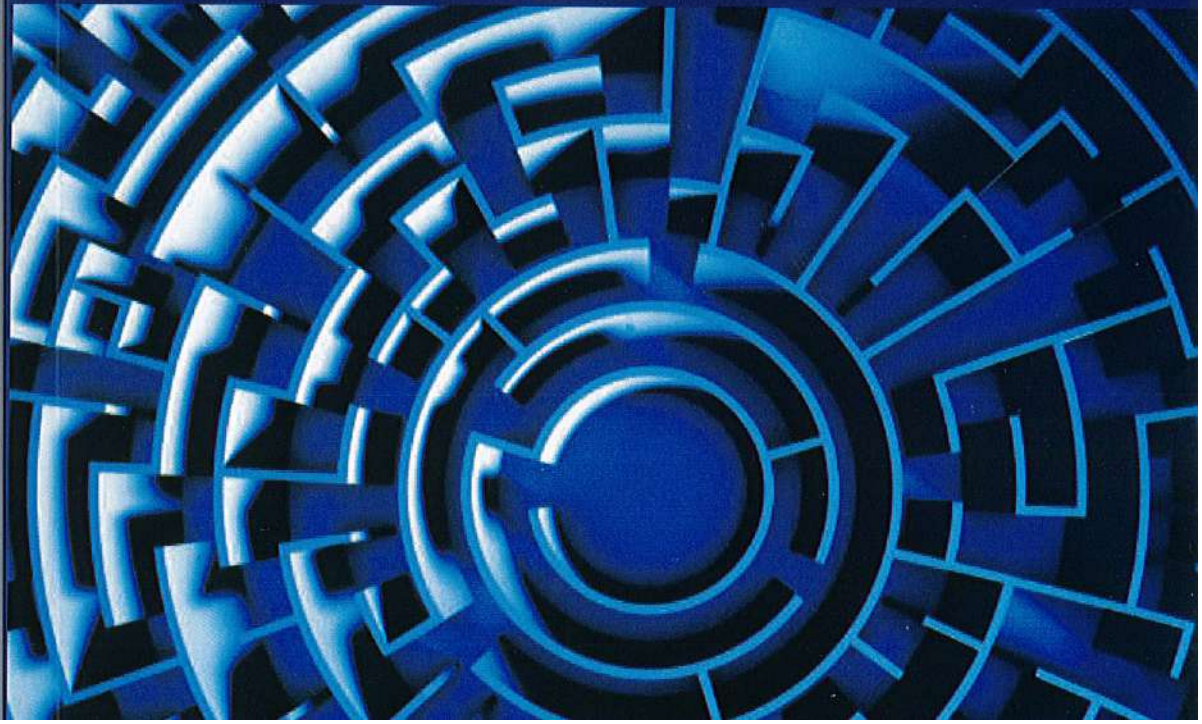


GENTIAN ELEZI

INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION  
AND COMPLIANCE IN  
THE EU ACCESSION PROCESS  
OF ALBANIA



Universiteti i Tiranës  
Instituti i Studimeve Evropiane

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INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION AND  
COMPLIANCE IN THE EU ACCESSION  
PROCESS OF ALBANIA

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in the EU accession process of Albania

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## INTRODUCTION

Albania was the last European country where communism collapsed after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The wind of change that spread throughout Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) arrived in late 1990 in Albania, when students took to the streets and started protesting. In this general atmosphere, Western Europe and the United States were seen as the future and at the heart of the Albanian people's ambitions. What the regime had prohibited now became the aspiration. The European model was so attractive for Albanians that the most famous slogan in the 1990s' protests was "we want Albania to be like Europe".<sup>1</sup> The communist and post-communist elite opened the country up to the world and started establishing diplomatic relations with European countries once again. However, it was only after the Labour Party<sup>2</sup> (LP) lost the election in 1992 that the country started its path towards the European Union (EU). Albania engaged in diplomatic and economic relations with the EU by signing an agreement for economic and trade cooperation with it. This agreement aimed at increasing trade flows between the two and at laying the foundation for a political orientation of Albania towards the establishment of a functioning democracy and free market economy by harmonising its legislation. In the first half of the 1990s, Albania continued to successfully profit from EU assistance, and its institutions engaged in numerous urgent reforms. However, the events of 1997, the civil unrest caused by the collapse of fraudulent financial companies, represented a major step back for the country on its European path.

<sup>1</sup> In Albanian "*E duam Shqipërinë si gjithë Europa*".

<sup>2</sup> The ruling party during the communist regime in Albania was called the Labour Party.



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Dr. Gentian Elezi is a lecturer in EU Politics and holder of the Jean Monnet Chair at the Institute of European Studies, of the University of Tirana. He has an extensive experience in European integration, researching and teaching courses in different universities, including as a visiting lecturer at the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom.

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