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Albania's integration challenges for strengthening of public administration in the context of EU integration

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Abstract

Albania's integration into the European Union is a strategic objective of the stakeholders in programs of social policy in our country. Achieving this goal means major development and economic progress of the country, development of democracy and building an effective state according to the European model. Public administration has a crucial role in the European integration process of the country. Public administration has duty to implement commitments undertaken the government as part of this process.

Keywords: EU integration, Challenges of Albania, Public administrate

1. Introduction

The fall of communist regimes in all countries of Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe expressed their desire to integrate into the European Union. This resulted in the signing of agreements before the association and economic and trade cooperation. Requests that were made were, first and foremost, an expression of the peoples of these countries to reunite with democratic Europe, with that part of the continent which you belonged, not only geographical and historical, but spiritual affinity cultural. European democracy and market economy for many years had served as a showcase for the welfare and prosperity of Europeans who lived before the Iron Curtain (Milo, 2002). In requirements that were made and pragmatic reasons, calculation of interest on domestic credibility in political life, without excluding a certain naivety that come from ignorance and fostered the hope that opening the door to the EU for these countries would mean automatically and opening the doors of paradise. EU enlargement with new members was and remains an irreversible process.

He can not stop, because he went counter to the philosophy and its major objective, the creation of a united Europe, integration into the great European family to the other half of the continent. For this reason the expansion remains a major challenge venture and historical. Democratic reunification of Europe had many advantages: strategic, political, economic, social, cultural, etc.. The European Union will become a major force in the era of globalization, would make a strong presenter and voice and the role of Europe in world affairs, more collaborative and more effective to cope with major challenges: maintaining peace, defeating international terrorism, organized crime, environmental pollution, the poverty, etc.

It will create all the space in a unique European political, defense of the democratic rights of the minority, and amounted to harmonize foreign policy and security, will further expand the European single market and protect, develop and better integrate cultural values of each nation. Besides positive and optimistic estimates for the further expansion of the European Union in the last decade of the twentieth century, and appeared to opposing opinions and attitudes, negative and pessimistic, reservations and hesitations. The debate about this issue included political circles and institutions of the EU national, academics and university researchs, media elites and segments of civil society. Calls for a cautious policy had an argument membership cost and negative impact that could bring in enough areas that, even without the other members, were problematic. One of the most striking examples was the issue of employment. Rapid membership countries of central and eastern Europe in the EU, or all forms of immigration to Europe will further burden the situation, when it was known that in 1996 in member countries there were 19 million unemployed.

The importance of agriculture in the economy of these countries is very large relative to the weight it has in the EU as in the level of gross domestic product and in that employment. Immediate acceptance of these countries to the EU would increase budget spending much more on agriculture. Such action going counter to the interests of a few large member countries of the EU and European farmers generally. So would create difficulties in the distribution system of financial support from rich regions to poorer ones EU. Socio-economic parameters of these countries were poor compared with those of the EU and they were serious obstacles in the way of membership. Public opinion of the member countries of the EU is almost only half divided on the issue of accepting new members and only a simple majority is declared in favor of some candidates from focal Europe, South East, proving it by numerous surveys. Postcommunist transition difficulties, social and economic backwardness inherited from these countries, as well as the pressure of a good part of the public did European leaders and EU institutions to formulate balanced opinions on the issue of enlargement. Historical dimension of the issue and dilemmas that accompany it were reflected in European politics and legitimized in a documentary series of acts of the institutions of the European Union.

2. Integration process and challenges

Discipline of the enlargement process and encode the accession of new members to the new circumstances was the first important act, which approved the European Union after the collapse of the initial euphoria that caused the fall of communism in Europe both sides. In 1992 the European Commission was tasked to draft a report on the future relations between the community and the countries that wanted integration.

This report entitled "Europe and its expansion challenges" was presented at the meeting of the European Council in Lisbon in June 1992, while another named "Towards a closer association with PECO" consideration was given to the European Council, a year later, at its meeting in Copenhagen. Copenhagen European Council adopted the basic criteria through compliance and enforcement of which the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe can become members of the European Union. Document adopted at this meeting and who took the name of the Danish capital will become a very important reference point to assess the preparations of a particular country to be accepted into the EU.

It states explicitly that 'acceptance will be made at the time of association when a country is able to meet the obligations of membership by completing economic and political conditions required. To respect the political criteria candidate countries must meet five conditions:

- Stability of institutions;
- Guarantee the democratic character of the political regime;
- Implementation of the rule of law;
- Respect for human rights;
- Respect for and protection of minorities.

As regards the economic criteria was important achievement of two primary criteria:

- The existence of a market economy and its stability;
- Capacity to cope with competitive pressure and economic market forces in the functioning of economic and monetary union.

The document also urged the necessity for admission capacity to fulfill the obligations of accession, including the assumption of objectives in the political union and economic and monetary union. Candidate countries were required to be legislation and rules of the EU and efficiently administer financial assistance, through a reform of the legal and administrative system. Copenhagen criteria defined principled basis of opening the gates of the EU birth right. But to assist this process it was necessary to rely candidate countries to ensure the fulfillment of these criteria. In this way passed the pre-accession strategy which was designed to reinforce the EU's relations with these countries and help them meet the conditions already prescribed for membership.¹

The strategy contained four elements key:

- Implementation of association agreements (European agreements);
- Support the transition process through the PHARE program;
- Structured dialogue with the EU institutions and
- Preparation of the associated countries integration in the internal market.

Madrid European Council gave a further impetus to the process of accession of central and eastern Europe. He tasked the European Commission to prepare an opinion on each candidate country and a study on the implications of enlargement in various community policies (Bast Jurgen, 2003) . Also, the Commission was asked to do an analysis of possible transition arrangements and temporary exceptions for individual candidates. Adopted Amsterdam Treaty which adopted the 'A protocol on the institutions in the perspective of enlargement of the European Union'. Based on the request of the Madrid European Council, the Commission in its document 'Agenda 2000', expressed his thoughts on each candidate country.

He initially had reviewed the progress made by PECO under the association agreements and then had an assessment of the candidate countries on the basis of their adherence to the three political criteria:

- Democracy and rule of law;
- Human rights and respect for minorities.

¹ Eesels, Wolfgang, Europa From A-Z, fq 232

On the proposal of France, the European Council decided to organize a European conference, at the level of Heads of State and Government of the member countries of the EU candidate countries that will be followed by another meeting in October of that year at the level of foreign ministers (Tuci., 2003) . European Conference would be a multilateral forum of political consultation, which would have to object to address issues of general interest to the participants, with the aim to develop and intensify their cooperation in the field of foreign policy and security, justice of affairs as well as in other areas of mutual interest like the economic and regional cooperation. Further EU Council on the proposal of the Commission adopted a regulation framework for accession partnership and set the principles, priorities and intermediate objectives and conditions of each partnership.

3. Challenges of strength of public administrate

The European integration process has direct implications for public administration reform process. While there is no common body of the EU legislation to regulate the functioning of public governance, the historical experience of the most recent EU enlargements has crystallised the so called European principles of public administration, which countries need to follow in order to approximate EU standards. The European principles of public administration can be applied to individual countries, or economies, regardless of whether or not they seek EU membership (Bayramov,V. & Hovhannisian,K. & Kasemets,K.& Pikulik,A.& Secrieru,A. & Sekarev,A. & Shanghina,L., 2011). Albania has participated in periodic political and economic dialogue with the EU through the SAA structures. Committee meetings and the Stabilisation and Association Council held in March and May 2013.

There are six subcommittees held meetings and a meeting of the task force for public administration reform. Albania participates in multilateral economic dialogue with the Commission and the member states of the EU to prepare the country to take part in multilateral surveillance and economic policy coordination within the Economic and Monetary Union of the EU (Ministry of Integration, 2013). For the purpose of the report, we refer to **governance** as formal and informal arrangements, which determine the way public decisions are taken and respective public actions carried out from the perspective on maintaining the country' s constitutional values (UN, 2007).

Public administration has a fundamental role in the European integration process of the country. It's public administration has a duty to implement commitments undertaken the government as part of this process. The arrangements also comprise management and coordination of the whole set of government activities related to implementation of laws and delivery of public services to the society (Brown, K. & Repucci,S., 2009.) .

Problems that is facing public administration during the transition have been numerous: they ranged from recruitment of civil administration based political connections, arbitrary movements and holidays from work, lack of work practices and the necessary logistics , to inadequate training, poor work performed by employees monitoring structures of administration, low wages and the general lack of motivation of civil servants. This state of public administration has been noted by the European Commission in monitoring reports on Albania.

In particular, the European Commission has been very skeptical about the ability of Albania's public administration to implement the Stabilisation and Association Agreement. This has been one of the main reasons for delaying so long the signing of the SAA. Public administration has as object the realization of the values that reflect the interests of the state or of a particular

community, recognized as such by the state, values that are drawn in the form of legislative acts p.sh.m. rights and fundamental freedoms. From the scope of its organization and law enforcement, public administration is closely related to the legislative and judicial powers, whose decisions are executed in the context of public administration.

Public administration is closely associated with the executive power, but it is not identified only with this power, because it has a wider coverage area. Public administration is distinguished from private administration of its public character, as a service to the general interest of society or a community of people with no limit (Dobjani, 2007) .

Albania's obligations foreseen in the SAA will be accompanied by large funds within community assistance programs. This means that the more progress Albania in the integration process, the greater will be the financial assistance of the European Community. On the other hand, since the phenomenon of corruption is not an isolated case in the Albanian public administration, but he often faces and wider, it is natural that Brussels does not want money from income tax on European citizens to enrich some people illegally in Albania. Without a public administration capable of understanding the integration process and the will of the appropriate professional consciousness, the process of EU integration of Albania can not progress.

3.1 Fighting gains corruption

The Council of Ministers "On the structure and organization of public institutions" is implemented at the central level. With a view to meeting the target of 2.5% in 2010, the proportion of temporary contracts with governmental agencies was reduced even further, currently 4.8%. Department of Public Administration is not fully able to implement its decisions or to coordinate effectively with other institutions, partly due to budgetary constraints. Management Information System of Human Resources is not fully functional second phase of the pilot is faced with considerable delays (Ministry of Integration, 2013). A public administration reform (PAR) is understood as deliberate changes to the structure and processes of public sector organisations with the objective of getting them (in some sense) to run better (Pollitt, C. & Bouckaer, G. , 2000,) .

The fight against corruption is a top priority of the country. Given how fundamental vision restoring the rule of law, the government is committed, seeking the engagement of the whole society, with a determined, serious governance, commitment, high accountability in the exercise of power and transparency, to dismantle the system of corruption and monopolies , increasing the strength of the rule of law by ensuring equality before the law for all and the rule of the latter full. For this purpose, in addition to deep institutional reforms, the government will pay attention to some fundamental aspects directly related to increasing the level of law enforcement.

On the whole, there has been progress in the reform of public administration and is taking a big step in this key with the approval of the Civil Service Law. Now there is an urgent need to implement it in practice and based on merit (Ministry of Integration, 2013). Should accelerate the implementation of existing legislation and administrative acts. Department of Public Administration should be strengthened. Independent institutions should be improved and their recommendations are taken into consideration. Efforts are needed to further depoliticize public administration, to ensure continuity, to fight corruption, strengthen meritocracy in appointments, promotions and dismissals, to increase its efficiency and financial sustainability.

4. Conclusions

The process of European integration of Albania requires a pragmatic approach where the opportunities and challenges of the process should be discussed in a balanced and neutral. The responsibility of government involvement of stakeholders and the public in honest debate, is visible.

Political consensus and cooperative spirit among political actors should be implemented through a concrete agenda consensual, mainly on issues related to electoral reform, economic development, institutional, market, as the continued reform of the judiciary, as a matter crucial to the country's development, warranty for the implementation of the SAA and impetus to the process of European integration.

Despite the importance of respect for the electoral standards and progress in the fight against corruption, trafficking and organized crime, the European integration process should not be equated only with them. Instead, be transformed into a multidimensional process development, modernization and transformation of the country, in accordance with European standards enshrined in the *acquis communautaire*.

The Albanian Government should work seriously to build administrative capacity in accordance with the criteria of Madrid, through legal and transparent recruitment of specialized staff at prestigious Universities and Institutes, forecasting continuous training schemes, implementation of legislation on the civil service, with specifically, the decisions of the Civil service Commission and the Court of Appeal, as well as putting forward the responsibility of persons who have caused damage to the state budget from maltreatment of civil service legislation. To ensure a better coordination of multidimensional obligations stemming from this process, the Ministry of European Integration can be transformed into a structure to the Council of Ministers in the Prime Minister's direct dependence, which can ensure a better functioning of the priorities of the European integration of the country's development agenda.

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