

Legal aspects of the accession of Croatia to the European Union

Abstract

The EU enlargement policy is a fundamental instrument of the EU's foreign and security policy that enables Union to achieve its goals such as creating a common area of peace, stability and prosperity. Since the Western Balkans has experienced an armed conflict in the recent past and since these countries are direct neighbors of the European Union, the Balkan region represents an essentially important area in the strategic plans of the EU. The European Union as well as the Western Balkans' countries strives for the full integration into the European structures. In the context of the ongoing post-war reconstruction in the region Croatia's accession into the EU represents a significant historical moment. Croatia has already passed through the whole accession process and can act as a model example for other Balkan countries.

In this thesis author mainly aims to map in detail the course of the accession process in general and understand the specifics of the Croatian accession in the context of the European policy towards Western Balkans. Although the EU has set down the accession criteria and procedural rules, accession process of every candidate state is different and depends on the actual situation of the country in question. This thesis aims to analyze the legal aspects of Croatia's accession process emphasizing on the main obstacles that Croatia had to overcome. The situation of Croatia is similar to the situation of other Western Balkans' countries. The presented analysis should also outline the problems that might occur during the accession processes of other Balkan countries. Due to the large extent of the subject this thesis attempts to provide a contextual perspective focusing mainly on the legal aspects of the Croatia's accession process. The legal perspective is interesting also because it involves European law studies as well as international public law studies.