

Stabilization Association Agreement between EU and Kosovo

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Abstract

This article explains the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) between EU and Kosovo, as one of the first agreement which was signed by EU with Kosovo in the process of EU membership, which opened the door to a clear European integration perspective. The SAA as an important document for the Western Balkan countries which are part of the Stabilization and Association Process, is presented as a "guide" for candidate and potential candidate countries (such as the case of Kosovo with potential candidate country status), within ten years period of time (as foreseen in the agreement) to fulfill all the criteria for joining the European Union. However, as a result of the difference from other countries, Kosovo was the last signatory of this agreement, and with some specific specifications because of the relations currently existing between European Union and Kosovo. The SAA for Kosovo is distinguished for some specific specifications which differ from those of other countries in the region. Among its major distinguishing specific it is the EU's approach to political status because it reflects its common position with the Union. In this case, the EU has not only managed to establish a common position, but most of the member states (23 of the total 28) that Kosovo recognized as an independent state had to be convinced (5 member states of them) about the neutral attitude towards its political status. However, the European Union has found a solution in order for Kosovo to be part of the Stabilization and Association Process, like of all other Western Balkan countries. The inclusion of Kosovo was made possible after the agreement was reached for regional and international participation through the use of asterisks with footnote. This is a solution that the European Union has begun to apply where it refers to Kosovo. This approach is used in order to interpret the issue of political status form member states to be interpreted based on their attitudes. This is the best evidence that the common European Union policy, above all, is a composition of the individual stand of the governments of member states. This paper will outline some specifics that are specific to the SAA case for Kosovo unlike other countries in the region.

Keywords: Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA), European Union (EU), Kosovo, Stabilization and Association Process, membership.

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Academic Journal of Business, Administration, Law and Social Sciences ISSN 2410-3918 (print)

ISSN 2410-8693 (online)

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