



NEW THREATS TO NATIONAL SECURITY

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EDITORIAL

New Threats to National Security _____

_____ ***Asoc. Prof. Dr. Ervis ILJAZAJ*** _____

This edition of *Jus and Justicia* is dedicated to national security. In an era marked by rapid technological advancements, shifting geopolitical landscapes, and unprecedented global challenges, national security concerns are no longer limited to traditional military threats. Today's security environment demands a broader understanding of the multifaceted risks posed by both state and non-state actors, as well as by emerging domains such as cyber warfare, environmental degradation, and global health crises.

This issue, dedicated to new threats to national security, aims to bring together innovative research that critically examines the emerging dimensions of national security and offers fresh insights into policy implications. The issue seeks to explore not only the direct challenges posed to state stability, governance, and sovereignty but also the indirect factors—such as corruption, organized crime, and disinformation—that can erode national resilience. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, there is a pressing need for interdisciplinary perspectives that merge insights from law, international relations, technology, environmental science, and public health. By fostering a dialogue on these pressing issues, this special edition of *Jus and Justicia* hopes to contribute to the development of comprehensive strategies that safeguard national security in an increasingly volatile global landscape.

The academic papers of this edition are focused in the main issues of security like corruption that explores the impact of corruption on Albania's national security during the period 2018-2020, aiming to understand how corruption undermines democratic institutions, social stability, and the country's integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. Evolution of national security concept in Albania that explores the evolution of Albania's military thought from the declaration of independence in 1912 to the present day or the concept of smart defense in Albania and Kosovo that analyzes the evolution of the defense concept from a traditional approach to the new concept of «Smart Defense».

Other valuable academic papers concern the role of state for national security. The purpose of this treatment is to highlight the state as a separate political organization, as well as the main role and obligation it has for national security. The state is distinguished from other political organizations in a society because it is sovereign and exercises absolute and unlimited power.

In conclusion national security is essential for maintaining a country's stability, sovereignty and well being. It Involves protecting a nation from external threats such as terrorism, cyberattacks, as well as internal challenges like economic instability and civil unrest.



Corruption as a Threat to National Security in Albania: An Analysis of 2018-2020

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Abstract

This paper explores the impact of corruption on Albania's national security during the period 2018-2020, aiming to understand how corruption undermines democratic institutions, social stability, and the country's integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. The purpose of this study is to examine the direct correlation between corruption levels and national security outcomes, such as political instability, organized crime, and the efficiency of law enforcement. The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative data from reports and documents with quantitative analysis of corruption indices, political stability indicators, and security metrics. The study finds that high levels of corruption have significantly weakened

Albania's institutional frameworks, hindered judicial reforms, and contributed to a decline in public trust in the government. Furthermore, the persistent corruption has delayed Albania's progress toward European Union integration, which has national security implications. The originality of this paper lies in its comprehensive analysis of how corruption directly affects Albania's security and stability, presenting empirical evidence that links governance issues to broader national security concerns. The paper contributes to existing literature by proposing actionable policy recommendations aimed at reducing corruption, improving institutional transparency, and enhancing the country's security capacity in Albania's context. The findings emphasize the importance of judicial reform, civic engagement, and international cooperation in addressing corruption and strengthening Albania's national security.

Keywords: *Corruption, National Security, Albania, Justice Reform, Transparency, Euro – Atlantic Integration*

Introduction

Corruption has existed since the dawn of humanity and the formation of the state, its origins so ancient that its roots reach deep into history. Corruption is a global phenomenon that deeply affects the economic, political, and social development of countries. It remains one of the most significant threats to Albania's national security, affecting political stability, economic development, and the credibility of public institutions. Defined by Transparency International as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain”, corruption in Albania is pervasive across public administration, justice, and law enforcement. In Albania, during the period 2018-2020, corruption-related challenges escalated, threatening national security and the process of integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. As the country progresses toward Euro-Atlantic integration, addressing corruption is critical not just for maintaining internal stability, but also for complying with international standards. This article examines how corruption undermines national security by weakening institutional frameworks, facilitating organized crime, and perpetuating social inequalities. It integrates insights from empirical data and key studies to provide actionable recommendations and proposes concrete measures to address this challenge.

Literature Review on corruption

Corruption has long been identified as a significant threat to national security, particularly in transitional democracies like Albania, where political, economic, and social systems continue to evolve. The relationship between corruption and

national security has been extensively explored in academic and policy circles, as corruption can undermine state stability, hamper economic development, and erode public trust in government institutions. This literature review examines key studies and frameworks that shed light on the impact of corruption on Albania's national security, with a focus on the period between 2018 and 2020.

The word "corruption" is derived from the Latin "*corruptio*," meaning "decay" or "decay." In antiquity, it was used to describe moral and spiritual degeneration (Johnston, 2005).

Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle saw corruption as a threat to justice and public welfare. Aristotle, in his work *Politics*, views corruption as a phenomenon where leaders use their power for personal gain, while ignoring the interests of citizens (Aristotle, 1998). According to him "*it (corruption: note of the authors) is not only a mutilation of the law, but has a serious impact on the state, and at the critical moment it is able to lead to destruction or obedience.*" In Aristotle's view corruption was the exploitation of public office for personal gain, directly linking it to the degradation of justice and social welfare.

Sun Tzu, in *The Art of War* (Tzu, 2005), highlights the role of integrity in leadership, warning that corruption within state structures undermines stability and strategic advantage.

During the Middle Ages, corruption was associated with sin and moral deviation. It was often described as abusing God-given power, including phenomena like the sale of indulgences by the church (Tierney, 1988). Religious and tradition-based laws saw corruption as a deviation from divine rules, condemning it as sin and as a danger to the organized structures of society.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, political philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke discussed corruption in the context of the social contract, linking it to the failure of governments to protect the rights and interests of citizens. Hobbes correlates corruption with the breakdown or failure of the social contract. He suggests that corruption can arise when rules act in ways that deviate from their duty to protect the common good, thus undermining the security and order that the social contract provides (Hobbes, 2009). In Locke's view, corruption occurs when those in power betray the natural rights of individuals (Locke, 1988).

In the European Renaissance, Niccolò Machiavelli, the Florentine renaissance politician of the 16th century, in his work "*The prince*" dealt with corruption in the context of politics, describing it as weakening institutions due to greed and mismanagement of power. According to him, corruption was an obstacle to the sustainability of the state. He defined corruption as "*state evil, at the core of which lies the exploitation of public opportunities for private interests*" (Machiavelli, 2005).

With the development of the modern state and bureaucracies in the 19th century, corruption began to be understood as abuse of public office for private gain. That perspective still prevails today (Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016).

In the 20th century, organizations like the United Nations and Transparency International have offered standardized definitions of corruption. Transparency International defines corruption as “abuse of trusted power for private gain” (Transparency International, 2020).

In the 21st century, the definition of corruption has become more complex, including several dimensions:

1. **Economical:** Corruption is seen as a factor that undermines economic development, increases inequality and discourages investment.
2. **Political:** Includes phenomena such as nepotism, clientelism, and manipulation of democratic processes for personal or group gain.
3. **Social:** Causes the loss of trust of citizens in institutions and weakening of social cohesion.
4. **Global:** In the era of globalization, corruption is seen as an international threat, including organized crime and money laundering.

In the Albanian context, corruption has gone from a moral and customary concept during the Ottoman period, to a legal and institutional problem after Independence. In the transitional years following the fall of the communist regime, corruption has taken on new dimensions, becoming a widespread phenomenon in the public and private sectors.

Judicial reforms and the establishment of institutions such as SPAK (Special Anti-Corruption and Organized Crime Structure) and the National Bureau of Investigation (BKH) aim to strengthen control over corruption. However, according to the *Albanian Security Barometer Survey* (Center for the Study of Democracy and Governance , 2020) public perception of institutional effectiveness remains low, signaling the need to enhance trust in security institutions. Drawing on data from the *Albanian Security Barometer Survey* (Center for the Study of Democracy and Governance , 2020) emphasize that public trust in security institutions and judicial reforms remains a major challenge. They argue that weaknesses in the judiciary and oversight institutions create opportunities for corruption and dysfunction. For instance, the lack of a quorum in the Constitutional Court during the justice reform period led to a “constitutional immunity” for certain laws and governmental decisions. This situation, combined with flaws in justice reform and political influence over key structures, undermines democratic functioning and negatively impacts national security, allowing corruption to infiltrate state structures.

At an international level, studies on the role of accountability in security (Transparency International, 2020) confirm the importance of independent oversight of security institutions to prevent corruption and ensure the protection of human rights. Similarly, the UNODC Report highlights that a lack of

accountability reinforces susceptibility to organized crime and weakens the rule of law (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime , 2019).

As reflected above, the definition of corruption has evolved continuously, reflecting historical developments and societal changes. From a moral and spiritual phenomenon to antiquity, it has evolved beyond traditional military threats and has become a major institutional and global problem in the modern age.

Albania, a former communist state, has been grappling with the transition to democracy and market economy since the early 1990s. Corruption remains one of the most persistent challenges, affecting all levels of government and society. Corruption weakens the state's capacity to address internal and external security challenges. Thus, for countries like Albania, where institutions are still developing, the destabilizing effects of corruption are magnified.

The development of “National Security” concept

National security is a complex concept that has evolved over time, reflecting changes in the needs and threats that countries face. From ancient territorial defense to more comprehensive concepts of economic, environmental and cyber security nowadays, the definition of the term “national security” has gone through several important stages of development.

In antiquity, national security was defined primarily as the ability of a state to defend its territory from invasions and external threats. Security in this period was related to the physical sovereignty and stability of the ruler. **Sun Tzu**, in his work *The Art of War*, describes security as a strategy to maintain the stability and power of the state through war or diplomacy (Tzu, 2005). Thucydides in “*History of the Peloponnesse War*” argued that military power and alliances were fundamental to protecting the interests of the state (Thucydides, 1972).

In the Middle Ages, national security was primarily related to the preservation of feudal order and the protection of the state from external threats, such as foreign invasions or internal uprisings. The church and religion played a major role. Security was considered a protection of divine order, and threats to the state were often described as threats to religion. The architecture of the fortresses and fortifications reflected the physical focus of national security at the time.

With the Peace Treaties of Westphalia (Croxtton, 1999) the concept of the sovereign state was consolidated, and national security began to be defined as protecting state sovereignty from external interference. In his work “*Leviathan*”, Hobbes states that a strong government is vital to ensuring security from external and internal threats (Hobbes, 2009).

National Security as a Comprehensive Concept

After World War II, the term “national security” took on a more strategic and globalized meaning. With the establishment of the United Nations and organizations like NATO, national security expanded to include international alliances. During the Cold War, national security was primarily associated with preventing nuclear threats and expanding communist influence. Military power, especially nuclear arsenals, became the mainstay of national security policy.

After World War II, economics and technology were also seen as key elements of national security, being included in states’ strategic plans. National security today encompasses a wide range of elements, beyond military protection, including:

- Economic Security: the ability to guarantee financial stability and control over strategic resources;
- Environmental Security: climate change and natural disasters are known as threats to national stability;
- Health Security: The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of public health as part of national security.
- Cybersecurity has become essential to the protection of critical infrastructure and national data (Clarke & Knake, 2010).

National security is closely linked to international security, making cooperation in organizations like NATO and the EU essential.

- In Albania, the concept of national security has developed according to various historical phases:
- During the Ottoman period: Security was related to the protection of local autonomy from the empire (Duka, 2007).
- After independence (1912): The focus was on preserving borders and strengthening the fragile state.
- During the communist regime: National security focused on preventing “imperialist threats” and maintaining internal stability through totalitarian control.
- After the ‘90s: National security took on a democratic and international dimension, focusing on integration into Euro-Atlantic structures, the fight against organized crime and corruption, as well as the modernization of the military. The evolution of the concept of “national security” reflects the historical and technological changes, as well as the different priorities of societies. From territorial protection in the early ages to

today's comprehensive concepts, the term has taken on an even wider significance. In an increasingly globalized world, national security requires a multidimensional, defining approach that includes military, economic, environmental and social aspects.

Research Question, Hypothesis and Methodology Approach

This study will examine how corruption affects Albania's national security during 2018-2020 using a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods. The hypothesis is that corruption weakens democratic institutions and the state's ability to safeguard national security. A case study design will be employed, focusing on Albania's political, economic, and security landscape during this transitional development period for the country.

Data collection will primarily involve documentary analysis of key reports, such as the European Commission's Progress Reports, Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, and Albanian government documents. These sources will provide insights into Albania's anti-corruption efforts, democratic institutions, and national security challenges.

For quantitative data, publicly available data from reputable sources like Transparency International, the World Bank, and Albanian government reports will be used. These data will be analyzed using correlation analysis to identify patterns between corruption levels and national security indicators such as political instability, crime rates, and defense spending.

The qualitative data from these documents will be examined using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes regarding the impact of corruption on Albania's democratic institutions and security. The results from both the qualitative and quantitative analyses will be triangulated to ensure validity and provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

This methodology will avoid interviews, focusing instead on secondary data sources. Ethical considerations will include the responsible handling of data and respecting the confidentiality of sensitive materials. Potential limitations include access restrictions to certain government documents and the challenge of establishing direct causality between corruption and national security outcomes, as many factors contribute to national security outcomes. However, the study will focus on identifying correlations and drawing informed conclusions.

By analyzing a range of data sources, including government reports and statistical indicators, the study aims to provide a comprehensive answer to the research question while testing the hypothesis that corruption weakens democratic institutions and the state's ability to safeguard national security.

The link between corruption and national security

Corruption and national security are closely interrelated, reflecting the way corruption undermines institutional stability and state integrity, creating significant risks to national security. Corruption undermines the capacity of the state to ensure security in several key aspects, including border protection, the fight against organized crime and terrorism, and the maintenance of social and economic stability. Widespread corruption in the public sector weakens the ability of institutions to enforce the law and protect citizens, increasing vulnerability to internal and external threats (Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016). Moreover, it creates opportunities for organized crime and terrorist groups to penetrate state structures or take advantage of institutional gaps (Johnston, 2005).

Economically, corruption destroys a country's financial stability by channeling resources to private interests rather than being used for national development and strategic needs. (Transparency International, 2020) highlights that countries with high levels of corruption often face deep poverty and economic inequality, which are destabilizing social security factors. An economically weakened state is most vulnerable to geopolitical pressures and foreign interference, reducing its ability to maintain its sovereignty and strategic independence (Bayley, 2005).

In the context of Albania, corruption has affected the ability of institutions to protect national security through lack of transparency and weakening of public trust. Organizations such as the European Commission have reported that corruption remains one of the main challenges in the field of rule of law and good governance in Albania, negatively affecting its Euro-Atlantic integration and regional stability (European Commission, 2020). Corruption in law enforcement and the justice system is particularly dangerous, as these institutions are essential for preventing security threats, including cross-border crime and terrorism (UNODC, 2019).

National security is not limited to territorial protection, but also includes the political, economic and social stability of a country. Corruption, undermining state institutions and their integrity, directly affects the following elements:

1. **Weakening the Rule of Law:** Corruption in the justice system hinders the implementation of the law and punishment of crimes. During 2018-2020, reports by international organizations such as (Transparency International, 2020) and (GRECO, 2014) have highlighted that Albania faces widespread corruption in the judiciary and public administration.
2. **Political Stability Risk:** Corruption has contributed to political polarization and the decline of citizens' trust in public institutions. Massive anti-government protests reflect the public's discontent at perception of high-level corruption.

3. **Organized Crime Financing:** Corruption facilitates the activities of criminal groups by providing access to public contracts, customs, and building permits. This mutual cooperation between criminal groups and corrupt officials threatens the economic and social security of the country.
4. **International Security Risk:** Albania, as a candidate country for the European Union and a NATO member, is obligated to ensure high standards of governance. Corruption in the defense or security sector could weaken its role as a reliable international partner.

2018-2020 period in Albania: An analytical overview

Albanian anti-corruption legislation is based on international acts and adapts to the economic, social, political reality of our country. It extends its power to private enterprises, including public servants, judges, prosecutors and elected to local or central functions, where it also provides for heavy sacrifices.

During this period, some key elements highlight the impact of corruption on national security in Albania:

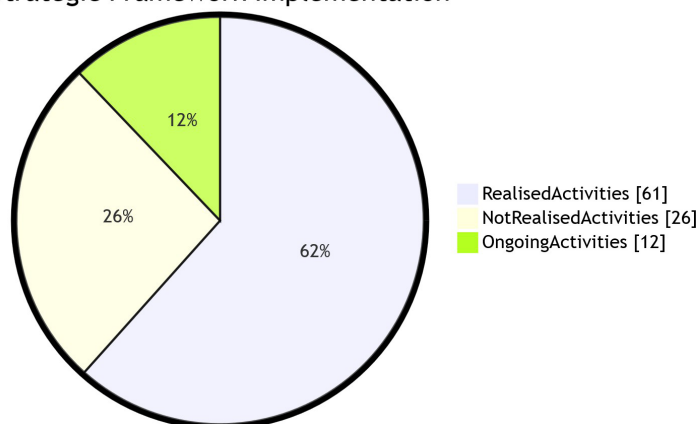
1. **International Reports:** Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) ranked Albania among the most corrupt countries in Europe. In 2020, Albania achieved a score of just 36 points, showing little progress compared to previous years.
2. **Justice Reform:** Despite the changes coming from the justice reform, the slowdown of the vetting process and resistance from powerful structures have limited its impact. In 2018-20, only a limited number of judges and prosecutors were discharged for violations or corruption.
3. **Public contracts and PPPs:** Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) are often used as tools to favor companies linked to vested interests. Insufficient scrutiny has led to allegations of misuse of public funds and illegal profits.
4. **Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic:** The pandemic has further exposed vulnerabilities in the health system, including lack of transparency in emergency procurement and mismanagement of public funds.

Corruption is classified in relation to organization and extension, as low-level or simple (horizontal) corruption, where this form is extended massively to the lower layers offering different services. High-level or vertical corruption extends to high spheres of power and decision-making, being linked to organized crime and carrying high risk.

Today, with the creation of special anti-corruption structures, the law enforcement authorities have some real independence to fight this phenomenon. The criminological characteristics of corruption have many features as all the activities of the development of human society are vulnerable to this phenomenon.

GRAHP 1:

Strategic Framework Implementation



This graph illustrates the distribution of corruption cases in Albania across different categories during 2018-2020. The data represents the breakdown of corruption cases by type, including passive corruption, active corruption, and abuse of office. The visual representation helps understand the predominant forms of corruption during this period

Crimes related to corruption have their own diverse characteristics and are related to both the state and the economic or public sphere. Usually, the state employees who perform this activity are assisted by a circle of people and later they are rewarded by being compensated for their assistance.

This way a vicious circle is created without beginning and ending, creating a criminal subordination with illegal benefits as a result of corrupt actions. E.g. illegal appointments in the administrations, hierarchical career rise, undeserved dubious rewards normally arising from taxpayers which also raise great debate in public opinion, being a sensitive element for the majority of the population.

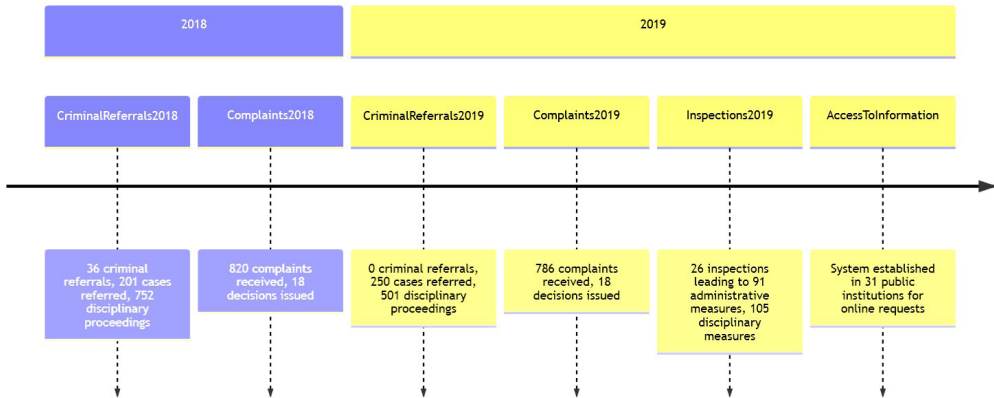
Among the characteristics of corrupt actions, the two beneficiaries act with mutual approval, benefiting from measurable goods, privileges, favors and making concrete actions to conceal their criminal activity. The essential distinguishing features of corruptive actions are unjust decisions, violations of the law or unacceptable moral normal. The criminological characteristics are relative criminological stability, high latent coefficient, etc.

The analysis of criminal offences involving corruption, trends and changes are evident during 2020 when new institutions are functioning specifically to combat this phenomenon directly related to organized crime.

In 2020, the special prosecution (SPAK) sent 70 criminal proceedings to trial. 260 people were charged, of whom 95 defendants were accused with corruption-related offenses.

GRAPH 2:

Timeline of Anti-Corruption Measures



This diagram presents the distribution of the 70 criminal proceedings sent to trial by SPAK in 2020. It shows that out of 260 total defendants, 95 were specifically charged with corruption-related offences. The visual representation demonstrates the proportion of corruption cases among total criminal proceedings handled by SPAK.

The data noted a decrease in criminal offences in the field of corruption in 2019 with 9.88% of the number of registered proceedings for these offences, compared to 2018. The specific weight that this group of criminal offences occupies for 2019, compared to the total number of criminal proceedings registered on a country scale, is 0.50% while for 2018 this indicator has been 0.55%. The year 2020 has also brought a drastic reduction in criminal offences of corruption¹, compared to 2019.

As for specific criminal offences that are included in the corruption groups, their tendencies appeared in the graph below. In the analysis, some of the criminal offences that have a significant impact on public opinion regarding corruption, such as that of public officials, illegal influence, or corruption of judges and prosecutors²

Corruption is shown in the graphic 3.

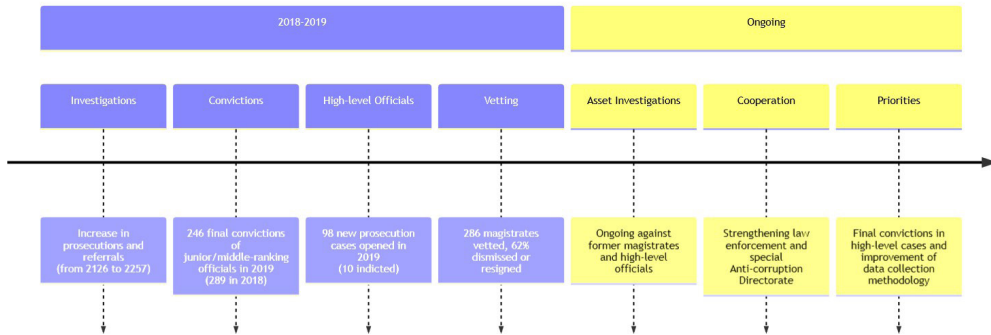
To identify corruption, different research methods are used, the most accurate among these are the methods used by the (Transparency International, 2020).

According to Transparency International report for 2020 (Transparency International, 2020), our country was rated 36 points and ranked 104th in the 180 countries. Compared to 2019, the country has grown by one point and two places among 180 states.

¹ Report on the Activity of the Special Prosecution During 2020, www.spak.gov.al

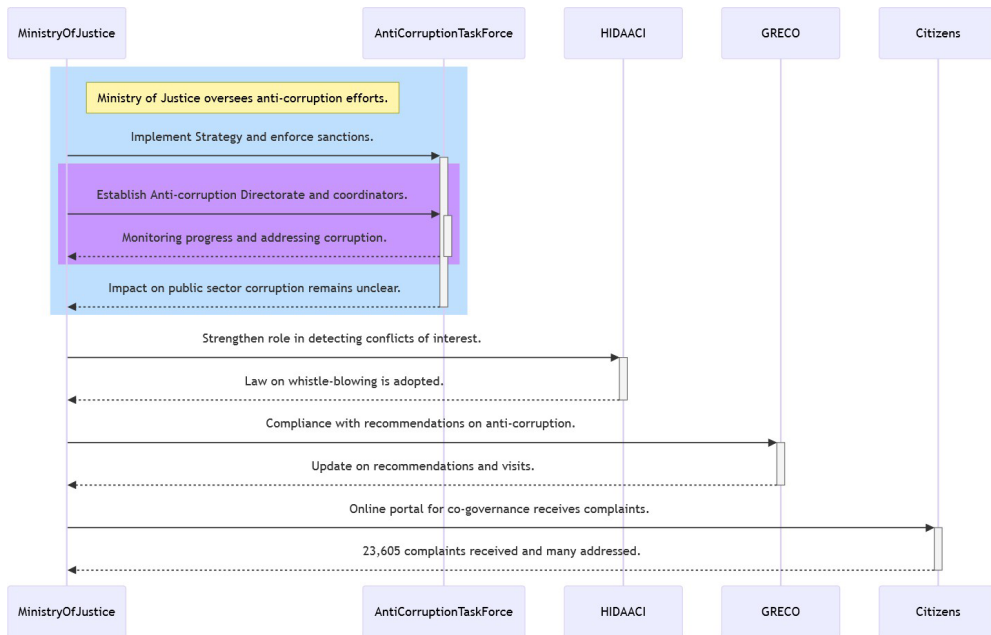
² The data were obtained from the General Prosecution Report for the three years 2018-2019-2020, <https://www.pp.gov.al/>.

GRAPH 3:
Timeline of Anti-Corruption Efforts



This graph displays the trends in corruption-related criminal offenses from 2018 to 2020. It shows the decline in registered corruption proceedings, from 0.55% of total criminal proceedings in 2018 to 0.50% in 2019, with a further reduction in 2020. The visualization helps track the year-over-year changes in corruption cases.

GRAHP 4:



This diagram presents Albania's ranking in the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index. It shows Albania's score of 36 points and 104th position among 180 countries in 2020, representing a slight improvement of one point and two positions compared to 2019. The visual helps track Albania's international standing regarding corruption perception.

Results

The analysis of corruption's impact on Albania's national security from 2018 to 2020 reveals several key outcomes, which are interconnected and have deep implications for the country's institutional stability and security landscape. The findings can be categorized into three primary areas: the weakening of democratic institutions, a significant decline in public trust, and setbacks in Albania's Euro-Atlantic integration process.

1. **Democratic Institutions:** One of the most profound effects of corruption during the period under review has been the weakening of Albania's democratic institutions, particularly in the areas of justice and public administration. The dysfunctionality of independent institutions, such as the judiciary, is evident in the failure to implement reforms and hold officials accountable. Despite legal frameworks like the justice reform and anti-corruption measures, progress has been slow. These institutional weaknesses have hindered the country's ability to provide effective governance and uphold the rule of law, critical components for ensuring national security (European Commission, 2020) (GRECO, 2014).
2. **Public Trust:** Public trust in the government and public institutions has significantly deteriorated. Reports from Transparency International spanning 2018 to 2020 have consistently highlighted the escalating dissatisfaction among Albanian citizens regarding the transparency of governmental processes and the efficacy of anti-corruption initiatives. The absence of accountability within political and administrative entities has weakened the relationship between the state and the public. As citizens become increasingly disenchanted with the lack of meaningful advancements, their trust in state institutions, particularly in law enforcement and the judiciary, is profoundly affected. This erosion of public trust not only jeopardizes the nation's stability but also hampers its ability to mobilize collective national responses to security challenges, both domestic and international.
3. **Euro-Atlantic Integration:** Corruption remains a significant obstacle to Albania's aspirations of integration into the European Union. Throughout 2018-2020, Albania was repeatedly criticized by the European Commission for failing to meet critical governance standards, particularly in the areas of judicial independence, anti-corruption efforts, and public sector transparency. For Albania, this delay represents more than just a political setback; it is also a national security issue, as it limits the country's ability to strengthen its defense capabilities, secure foreign investments, and align with broader regional security strategies (European Commission, 2020).

These results underscore the multifaceted and widespread nature of corruption in Albania, demonstrating how it directly undermines the core functions of state institutions, erodes public trust, and stalls the country's progress towards full integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.

Discussion

The analysis shows that corruption poses a direct threat to national security by weakening institutional stability and hindering progress toward integration into the EU.

Albanian corruption from 2018 to 2020, as highlighted, clearly shows that corruption not only cripples public institutions, but also encourages organized criminal activities and diminishes trust in public administration. This part of the study builds on these findings by adding further analysis on the effects and solutions of corruption in Albania.

The problem of Albanian crime crosses all borders: internal and external, supervisory and judicial. There is a definite correlation, for example, between a lack of crime-controlled institutions and an increase in the rate of crime. This study shows that corruption of police and judicial powers has aided organized crime, making it extremely difficult to effectively police transnational prostitution and drug terrorism. These findings are aligned with broader theories of how corruption can weaken the state and create vulnerabilities in national security frameworks, by reducing the state's ability to protect itself from external threats. Corruption exposes the state to external abuse of its sovereignty and is therefore a security problem. In support of this proposition, it can be noted that many internal problems receive external attention, which further complicates their solution at the local level.

1. National Security

This paper shows the correlation between corruption and its effects on national Albania's national security by destabilizing democratic institutions, hindering the country's ability to combat organized crime, and jeopardizing the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies. A corrupt judiciary, for instance, fails to provide the necessary legal framework to prosecute crimes effectively, leaving the country vulnerable to criminal networks. The inability to ensure the rule of law and provide consistent governance feeds the cycle of instability, making it easier for corruption to flourish and organized crime to operate unchecked.

Moreover, the economic consequences of corruption further exacerbate security challenges. Public funds that should have been directed towards

critical sectors like defense, infrastructure, and law enforcement are siphoned off for private gain, leaving the state ill-equipped to deal with emerging security threats. This presents a major national security risk, as an economically weakened state is more susceptible to internal unrest and external pressures, particularly in the context of geopolitical competition.

2. Impact on Public Trust and Social Stability

Corruption's erosion of public trust is a critical issue for Albania's social and political stability. The declining confidence in state institutions hinders cooperation with the state in addressing security threats. One of the most pressing consequences of this declining trust is the risk of political instability, which can lead to further fragmentation of the political landscape, creating openings for extremist groups or organized criminal networks to exploit the situation for their own benefit, ultimately undermining national security.

3. Delaying Euro-Atlantic Integration

The delay in Albania's progress toward integration into the EU is another direct consequence of the corruption epidemic. This institution demand rigorous adherence to democratic principles and anti-corruption standards, which Albania has struggled to meet. As the study suggests, corruption not only weakens institutional capacity but also harms the country's international reputation, preventing it from fully aligning with the democratic values and standards upheld by the EU. Albania's inability to combat corruption threatens its role as a reliable partner to the EU.

Recommendations and Conclusions

To address the identified challenges, a multi-faceted approach is needed. First, continued and accelerated justice reform is essential. The vetting process must be strengthened, and greater transparency is needed in both judicial and law enforcement procedures. Justice reforms, supported by international partners, are essential to address these challenges. Second, Albania should continue to work with international partners to implement a comprehensive anti-corruption strategy that includes strict oversight of public contracts, transparent procurement processes, and the strengthening of civil society to monitor government activities.

Third, public education and engagement are crucial. The government should actively involve citizens in decision-making processes to restore public trust. Educating citizens and involving them in decision-making processes can enhance transparency and accountability, making it harder for corruption to thrive. Additionally, supporting an independent media and bolstering civil society organizations will be key in ensuring long-term progress in the fight against corruption.

Finally, Albania must align its national security strategies with its integration goals. This means prioritizing reforms that not only address corruption but also contribute to strengthening the country's institutional framework, defense capabilities, and overall governance structures. Doing so will better position Albania to meet the standards required for full integration into the EU, ultimately enhancing its national security.

Corruption is a major threat to Albania's national security, weakening institutions, economics and political stability. The years 2018-20 have shown that efforts to fight it are insufficient and require greater engagement from all stakeholders. If not addressed decisively, the consequences of corruption will continue to undermine Albania's efforts to build a modern and stable state.

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Evolution of National Security Concept in Albania

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Abstract

This paper explores the evolution of Albania's military thought from the declaration of independence in 1912 to the present day. The study examines the key periods of development in military thought, focusing on external influences and internal political, economic, and social transformations. It aims to reveal how Albania, as a small state in the Balkans, has adapted its military strategies in response to ongoing geopolitical challenges.

The methodology employs historical and comparative analysis, investigating major phases in Albania's military history. Key sources include historical literature, military documents, and strategic analyses of the independence period, World War II, the post-liberation era, and changes brought by the pluralistic system.

The central research question is: How has Albania's military thought evolved from a domestic defensive strategy to international cooperation and participation in peacekeeping operations? The study aims to analyze the dynamics that have shaped the country's military policy and their impact on Albania's integration into international security structures. Ultimately, this paper sheds light on the transformations in Albania's military thought and their influence on contemporary defense policies.

Introduction

Issues in the Evolution of the Concept of Security Following the Creation of the Albanian State

The evolution of the concept of security in Albania, since the declaration of independence in 1912, reflects the complex transformation processes that the country has experienced in the political, economic, and social spheres. As a small state in the Balkans, Albania has continually faced challenges in preserving its sovereignty and territorial integrity, including the historical and geopolitical tensions of the region. Various scholars emphasize that “the development of the concept of security in Albania is influenced by the country’s strategic position and regional circumstances” (Kaplan, 2015; Duka, 2012). In this context, the concept of security has evolved from territorial defense to a comprehensive approach that includes modern challenges such as terrorism, organized crime, and cyber threats.

The first steps toward building a national security strategy were undertaken under the leadership of Ismail Qemali and other figures of independence. These efforts focused on establishing a national army and safeguarding sovereignty within a chaotic regional environment. According to Frashëri (2007), the development of a stable security system was constrained by interventions from the great powers and a lack of national resources. Subsequent periods, particularly during World War II and the communist regime, brought significant changes to the concept of security, influenced by ideology and international alliances.

Kaplan (2015) argues that “communist ideology had a strong influence on Albanian security strategies, orienting them toward popular defense and guerrilla warfare.” During the period of international isolation, Albania adopted a comprehensive defensive approach, mobilizing national resources to confront external threats. After the 1990s, political changes and efforts for Euro-Atlantic integration transformed the concept of security, steering it toward international cooperation and participation in peacekeeping operations (Duka, 2012).

This paper aims to analyze the evolution of the concept of security in Albania from the declaration of independence to the present day. By examining key historical periods, ideological influences, and contemporary challenges, it seeks to shed light on the factors that have shaped the concept of security and the ways in which Albania has adapted to address both national and international demands.

Chapter 1: The Concept of Security during the Independence Period (1912–1939)

The period of Albania's independence from 1912 up to the eve of World War II represents a critical stage in the formation of the Albanian state and the development of military thought. Efforts to establish a national army and formulate defense strategies were major challenges for a new and fragile state like Albania. These difficulties were intensified by external pressures from the Great Powers and by the country's internal problems, which included a lack of resources and unstable state structures (Puto, 2009). During this period, the development of military thought was dictated not only by the need to protect borders but also by efforts to consolidate the authority of the state throughout its territory.

1.1. The Formation of the National Army

After the declaration of independence on November 28, 1912, the creation of a national army to defend the newly gained sovereignty became a priority for Ismail Qemali's government. At that time, Albania faced the absence of a centralized military structure, since historically the territory had been organized into autonomous tribal units. Building a national army from this situation proved difficult due to the lack of financial resources, modern military technology, and experience in managing regular military structures (Fischer, 1999). Despite the government's efforts, it encountered significant challenges, including interference from the Great Powers and pressures from neighboring states, which capitalized on Albania's weaknesses. The lack of financial and material support hindered the establishment of a strong army, meaning many troops depended on local structures. As Frashëri (2005) points out, the involvement of local notables in the efforts to create a national army was vital, but these leaders often acted in their own interests, which clashed with national priorities. As a result, the Albanian army remained weak and mostly reactive, functioning more as a temporary defensive force rather than a well-organized body prepared to face major threats.

1.2. Defense Strategies and Early Period Constraints

Albanian military thought in the early years of independence relied on a pragmatic approach oriented toward border defense and internal stability. Due to the lack of a strong regular army, the government often relied on tribal ties and local forces to protect territories (Pollo, 2005). This approach was necessary for a fragmented society without strong state infrastructure.

However, Albanian military strategies during this period were rudimentary, and there was no well-formed military doctrine. According to Fischer (1999), “Albanians did not have a consolidated military tradition or a defined model for organizing the army.” For this reason, the government sought models from other Balkan countries and from the Great Powers, especially Austria-Hungary, which played a significant role in organizing and training the Albanian army during this period (Fischer, 1999).

In the 1920s and 1930s, efforts to strengthen military structures continued, but financial problems and external interference significantly limited progress. Although there were attempts to create a regular army, reliance on foreign assistance for equipment and training remained high. Internal political tensions and a lack of institutional stability hindered the creation of a clear defense strategy. As Duka (2012) observes, “Albania, during this period, remained dependent on foreign powers, failing to build an independent defense model.”

Despite these limitations, Albanian leaders sought to consolidate a national idea of defense based on the population and tribal ties. During the 1930s, the influence of autocratic regimes in the region began to be reflected in Albania, leading to a more centralized approach to military thought. According to Fischer (2009), “the autocratic ideology in the region influenced Albanian strategy, orienting it toward greater central control.” This gradual transformation laid a foundation for organizing the army, but it remained fragile until the outbreak of World War II.

2. The Concept of Security during World War II and the Communist Period (1940–1990)

The period encompassing World War II and the communist regime in Albania represents one of the most significant and complex phases in the evolution of the concept of national security. As Albania transitioned from an occupied country during the war to an isolated and ideologically radical communist state, the concept of security underwent profound transformations. During this era, Albania was heavily influenced by the policies and ideologies of the great powers, especially the Soviet Union and China, developing a unique approach to national security that would have long-term effects on the country’s defense policy and structure.

2.1. The Concept of Security during World War II (1940–1945)

During World War II, Albania became a stage for multiple invasions and conflicts among foreign powers. Italy’s invasion of Albania on April 7, 1939, marked the beginning of the country’s involvement in major international conflicts. King Ahmet Zogu and his government faced a politically and strategically unprepared situation to confront the Italian aggression, resulting in a rapid occupation and

capitulation of Albania within a matter of days (Fischer, 1999). Consequently, Albania became an Italian protectorate until 1943, when Italy withdrew following its capitulation to the Allies.

Meanwhile, resistance against the Italian occupiers began to organize through partisan groups led by the Albanian Communist Party, founded in November 1941. According to Fischer (1999), the security strategies followed by the partisan movement were primarily based on guerrilla warfare, a highly suitable approach given Albania's mountainous terrain. This guerrilla strategy included small, swift, and unpredictable attacks on occupation forces, avoiding direct confrontation with the better-equipped enemy troops.

Following Germany's invasion of Albania in 1943, the partisans' guerrilla warfare intensified and received substantial support from the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom. This military and ideological support helped Albanian partisans consolidate their position and liberate the country by the end of 1944. According to Dritëroi (2008), "the guerrilla warfare employed by the partisans introduced a new concept of national security, emphasizing the mobilization of the civilian population and the engagement of everyone in defense efforts." This security model became the foundation for the communist period, during which national security was regarded as a comprehensive project of state mobilization and control. The evolution of the concept of security in this era reflected not only the demands of the time but also the country's ideological orientation, laying the groundwork for a defensive approach that would serve as a reference point for the subsequent decades.

2.2. The Influence of the Soviet Union and China on the Concept of Security during the Communist Regime (1946–1961)

Following World War II and the establishment of the communist regime under Enver Hoxha's leadership, Albania adopted a model of national security heavily influenced by communist ideology and its close partnership with the Soviet Union. Between 1946 and 1961, Albania was positioned as an ally of the Soviet Union and received considerable military and technical assistance, which directly impacted the development of its concept of national security (Pollo, 2005). The Soviet Union helped establish a centralized security system in Albania, providing training and advanced technology. During this period, the concept of national security involved the participation of the entire population in the defense of the homeland, with a focus on preparing for potential conflicts through guerrilla warfare tactics. According to Fischer (1999), "Albania's security strategy was built on the full mobilization of the population and the preparedness to confront foreign aggression by any means necessary."

Soviet influence extended beyond physical security structures to include ideological components, emphasizing international solidarity with socialist countries and readiness to defend the communist system against Western capitalism and imperialism. Kaplan (2015) notes that “the Albanian concept of security during this period was a complete reflection of communist ideology and of the strategic relationship with the Soviet Union.” With the breakdown of relations between Albania and the Soviet Union in 1961, Albania shifted its strategic orientation by forging close ties with China. Under Mao Zedong’s leadership, China provided substantial military and economic support, further strengthening Albania’s self-defense capabilities. According to Fischer (1999), “China’s influence reinforced the radical elements of Albania’s security concept, emphasizing guerrilla warfare strategy and resistance against any foreign aggression.”

2.3. The Concept of Security during the Period of National Isolation (1960–1990)

The years 1960–1990 marked the culmination of a unique national security approach in Albania, in which every aspect of civilian life was interconnected with preparations for national defense. The regime of Enver Hoxha, including the period after the split with China in the 1970s, stressed the need for self-reliance and a defense strategy rooted in popular engagement. Large-scale investments in fortifications, bunkers, and shelters were central to this strategy, creating a security infrastructure oriented toward a people’s war (Duka, 2012). This security system involved not only military structures but also civilian components, mobilizing the population at every level. According to Duka (2012), “the idea of a people’s defense meant that every citizen was an element of national security, prepared to confront external aggression through collective resistance.”

Albania’s political isolation and severance from all international alliances made its concept of national security more focused on self-defense and maintaining an independent system. This concept had a strong ideological foundation, justifying extensive state control measures and continual preparation for a potential war against “external enemies.” Fischer (1999) observes that “the Albanian approach to national security during the communist regime was a unique combination of extreme isolation and centralized popular defense.”

2.4. The Impact of the Security Concept in the Post-Communist Period

With the fall of the communist regime in 1991, Albania began a long and challenging process of political and strategic transformation. The national security concept built during the communist era—based on isolation and a people’s defense—became increasingly unsuitable for modern challenges. In the post-communist

period, Albania sought integration into international structures, including NATO, and undertook reforms of its security system to meet contemporary global security demands (Duka, 2012). However, the legacy of the communist period, including outdated infrastructure and a strategic approach focused on self-defense, continued to influence the challenges Albania faced in addressing new threats. Efforts to reform the security concept are reflected in increased international cooperation and adaptation to challenges such as terrorism, organized crime, and cyber threats, representing a clear break from the isolation of the past.

Chapter 3: The Concept of Security after the Fall of Communism and the Path toward NATO Membership (1991 onward)

After the fall of the communist regime in 1991, Albania entered a period of profound political, economic, and military transformation. The military doctrine that had dominated for decades—based on isolation and a people’s defense—began to fade as the country moved toward international integration and the democratization of its institutions. Albania’s path toward military reforms and membership in international organizations, especially NATO, represents a significant period of reorganization of its defense structures and strategies. This chapter examines the transformations in Albania’s military doctrine following the collapse of communism, including the challenges of the transition period, the process of reforming the Armed Forces, and the country’s integration into international security structures.

3.1. The Transition of the Armed Forces and Military Doctrine in the Post-Communist Period (1991–2000)

With the collapse of communism and the dismantling of the centralized political system, Albania experienced a difficult transition period. The people’s defense doctrine that had dominated for over four decades was abandoned, while the country faced a profound institutional and economic crisis. The lack of financial resources and the decline of public order significantly affected the functioning of the Albanian Armed Forces (Duka, 2012). Military structures that had been based on an isolated, self-reliant system were no longer suitable for confronting the new realities of national and international security.

During this period, the Albanian military struggled with pronounced capacity shortages, both in terms of human resources and material support. Military reform became one of the main priorities of the new democratic government, which began a long and complex process of modernizing military structures and adapting them to the needs of a democratic state. According to Fischer (1999),

“Albania’s political and economic transition was closely intertwined with the reform of the military—a process requiring considerable time and effort to build modern defense capacities.”

One of the main challenges of this period was restoring public trust in the Armed Forces, which during the communist regime had played a significant role in maintaining the regime’s power. As Albania moved toward democratization, the new government faced the need to create a professional and reliable army operating within a democratic system and prepared for new responsibilities, including protecting public order and maintaining national security. According to Pollo (2005), “restructuring the Albanian military required not only changes in technical and organizational capacities but also a fundamental shift in its culture and its relationship with the citizens.”

3.2. The Reform Process and Preparations for NATO Membership (2000–2009)

In the early 2000s, Albania accelerated the reform of its Armed Forces, focusing on preparations for NATO membership. This process involved extensive changes to the country’s military structures and strategies, aimed at meeting the Alliance’s criteria and standards. As Fischer (2009) notes, “NATO membership became one of Albania’s primary foreign and security policy objectives, placing the country on a path of modernization and international integration.” One of the core aspects of these reforms was the professionalization of the Armed Forces and the transformation from a large, underprepared army to a smaller, well-trained force equipped according to international standards. Albania began receiving substantial assistance from Western countries to reorganize its military and improve its technical capacities. This process included modernizing military infrastructure, improving technology and weaponry, and involving Albania in joint exercises and operations with NATO member states (Duka, 2012).

A significant shift in Albania’s military doctrine during this period was the transition from a strategy of popular defense and isolation to a multilateral approach grounded in international cooperation. Albania started participating in peacekeeping missions and international operations under the umbrella of NATO and other international organizations, actively engaging in efforts to contribute to global stability (Pollo, 2005). This represented a major change in Albania’s security and defense philosophy, moving away from a strictly defensive, self-reliant approach to a more active role in international security operations.

In 2009, Albania reached a historic milestone by officially joining NATO. This marked the culmination of a long period of military reforms and the country’s commitment to building an army capable of fulfilling its duties within the Alliance. NATO membership not only provided Albania with greater security in its national

defense but also positioned the country on a stronger footing in the international security arena (Kaplan, 2015).

3.3. Albania's Security Concept after NATO Membership (2009 onward)

Following NATO membership, Albania's security concept has evolved in the direction of modernization and active engagement in international security. This transformation is based on the principles of international cooperation, Euro-Atlantic integration, and participation in peacekeeping missions and global security operations (Duka, 2012). Albania aims to position itself as a reliable partner within NATO, contributing to international peace and stability. A key pillar of Albania's security concept during this period is the enhancement of technological and professional capacities in defense institutions. Albania has invested in modernizing its defense infrastructure and improving the operational capabilities of its Armed Forces, creating capacities to adapt to contemporary security challenges (Fischer, 2009). Furthermore, participation in international missions—such as those in Afghanistan and other destabilized regions—has demonstrated Albania's commitment to contributing to global security efforts.

Addressing new security threats, including international terrorism, organized crime, and cyber threats, represents another essential component of the national security concept. Albania has intensified cooperation with international partners in intelligence and security, pursuing an integrated approach to tackling the challenges of the 21st century (Kaplan, 2015). Its involvement in global efforts against violent extremism and the strengthening of cyber defense capabilities have become priorities for Albanian institutions.

3.4. Regional Integration and Future Perspectives of Albania's Security Concept

An important dimension of Albania's security concept is its role in ensuring regional stability in the Balkans. As a NATO member, Albania has supported efforts to enhance regional security through military cooperation with other Balkan states. These efforts include organizing joint exercises and participating in initiatives to strengthen regional defense capacities (Duka, 2012). Through this engagement, Albania has demonstrated its commitment to collective security and to building a stable security environment in the region. Looking ahead, Albania intends to continue modernizing its security infrastructure and adapting to new global challenges. Priorities include advancing technological capabilities, increasing participation in international missions, and strengthening strategic partnerships (Kaplan, 2015). As a small country with limited resources, Albania will continue to rely on international partnerships to ensure national security and

contribute to global peace and stability. This process reflects not only Albania's commitment to addressing modern security challenges but also its efforts to build a sustainable national security concept that harmonizes its domestic needs with its role in the international security architecture.

Chapter 4: Albania's Security Concept in the 21st Century: Future Perspectives

In the 21st century, Albania faces a shifting international and regional security landscape that requires further developments and adaptations to its national security concept. Albania's successful integration into NATO in 2009 has fundamentally changed the country's role within the international security architecture, bringing new responsibilities to participate in peacekeeping operations and other global security engagements. This chapter focuses on the challenges and prospects for the future of Albania's security concept, including the modernization of defense capabilities, addressing new threats, and Albania's role in regional and global security.

4.1. Security Challenges in the 21st Century

A principal challenge for Albania's security concept is adapting to a constantly evolving security environment. Traditional threats of conventional conflict are being replaced by more complex challenges, including international terrorism, organized crime, cyber security, and humanitarian emergencies (Kaplan, 2015). As a country with limited resources, Albania faces the challenge of developing capacities to respond to these dispersed and intricate threats.

Albania's security concept has expanded to address not only traditional threats but also those that are domestic and transnational. Organized crime remains a continual threat in the Balkans, and Albania has intensified efforts to combat this issue through cooperation with international organizations and joint operations with neighboring countries (Duka, 2012). This approach reflects the need for a comprehensive strategy that tackles the complex challenges of regional security.

4.2. Cyber Security and Technology

Cyber security is a critical component of modern security. With the growing reliance on technology, cyber threats have become a serious challenge for Albania, including attacks on critical infrastructure and the leakage of sensitive data. To counter these challenges, Albania has begun to invest in building cyber capacities and creating specialized structures for monitoring and defending against cyber threats (Kaplan, 2015; Fischer, 2009).

In cooperation with NATO and other international partners, Albania has developed mechanisms to strengthen cyber defense and enhance its capabilities to respond to cyber incidents. These efforts include improving technological capacities and training specialists to address the rising challenges of the digital space.

4.3. Albania's Role in Regional and Global Security

As a NATO member, Albania has played an important role in promoting regional stability and building collective security in the Balkans. Through cooperation with neighboring countries and participation in joint military exercises, Albania has helped strengthen regional security capacities and establish mechanisms for conflict resolution (Duka, 2012).

Globally, Albania has contributed to peacekeeping missions and international security operations, demonstrating its commitment to international peace and stability. Moreover, Albania aims to strengthen its role as a reliable partner both in its region and beyond, by improving its defense capacities and bolstering its strategic relationships. Another key element of Albania's 21st-century military doctrine is its role in fostering stability in the Western Balkans. As a NATO member and one of the politically more stable countries in the region, Albania has significantly contributed to regional security and defense cooperation (Duka, 2012). This includes encouraging dialogue and military cooperation with neighboring countries—such as North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia—and actively participating in regional initiatives for maintaining peace and stability.

Because the Western Balkans remains vulnerable to potential tensions and conflicts, Albania has been involved in efforts to reinforce stability and prevent escalation in the region. By participating in regional security organizations and forums, Albania has helped strengthen ties among Balkan countries and promoted dialogue as a means for conflict resolution and improving inter-state relations (Kaplan, 2015). Going forward, Albania will continue to play an important role in regional security, working to bolster stability and promote cooperation among Balkan states. This entails participating in joint exercises and operations, sharing intelligence, and working to enhance the defense capacities of its neighbors.

In summary, in the 21st century, Albania's military doctrine faces a range of new challenges but has shown a high capacity to adapt to the demands of a changing world. Through modernizing the Armed Forces, engaging in international operations, and collaborating with regional and international partners, Albania has managed to build a modern army capable of facing the challenges of the 21st century. Confronting new security threats and improving technological and professional capabilities will remain key priorities for the future, while Albania continues to play an important role in regional and international security.

4.4. Future Perspectives

Looking ahead, Albania aims to continue developing a sustainable and comprehensive security concept that addresses both traditional challenges and contemporary threats. Priorities include:

- Modernizing defense capabilities, investing in advanced technology and improving critical infrastructure.
- Expanding participation in international missions, contributing to global peace and stability.
- Strengthening regional and international cooperation, building a security architecture that tackles the complex challenges of the 21st century.

Although it is a small country with limited resources, Albania intends to rely on international partnerships to ensure its national stability and to contribute to global efforts for peace and security. Through consistent and innovative engagement, Albania's security concept will continue to evolve to meet the demands of the times and to ensure a stable and secure future. Enhancing technological capacities remains one of the most significant successes in modernizing the Armed Forces. This includes developing new technologies for cyber defense, improving infrastructure for training and operations, and creating a more robust platform for addressing non-conventional threats. These efforts seek to ensure that Albania maintains a strong position within NATO and actively contributes to global stability.

4.5. Participation in International Operations

In the 21st century, Albania has demonstrated a strong commitment to participating in international security operations as part of its strategy to become a reliable partner within NATO and to contribute to global stability. By taking part in peacekeeping missions and operations supported by NATO and the United Nations, Albania has strengthened its international standing and enhanced its operational capabilities. According to Kaplan (2015), "Albania has played a significant role in international peace missions, contributing troops and resources to major operations in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and elsewhere."

One of the most notable examples of Albania's engagement in international missions is its participation in operations in Afghanistan, where the Albanian Armed Forces have made significant contributions to stabilization and reconstruction efforts. The experience gained from these missions has helped improve the professional capacities of the Albanian military and raised its

operational standards in line with those of NATO (Fischer, 2009). In the future, Albania will continue to contribute to international operations by focusing on enhancing its capacities to address global security challenges and supporting efforts to preserve peace and stability both in its region and beyond. This includes not only engagement in military missions but also efforts aimed at humanitarian aid and post-conflict reconstruction in destabilized countries.

4.6. Information Security in the Context of National Security

Information security has gained strategic importance in the modern era, becoming a crucial pillar of national security. In an increasingly technology-dependent global environment, protecting the integrity, confidentiality, and accessibility of information is a vital priority for safeguarding national interests. For Albania, given its distinctive history of military thought and security challenges since the establishment of its state, integrating information security into its national strategy reflects the need to meet the new demands of the digital age (Kaplan, 2015; Duka, 2012).

Information Security as a Component of National Security. Information security is directly connected to protecting critical infrastructure, crisis management, and defense against cyber threats. At a time when cyber attacks and data misuse are on the rise, states—including Albania—face new challenges that require technological investments and the development of human capacities (Fischer, 2009). Institutions such as the State Intelligence Service (SHISH) and the Ministry of Defense, as well as the Authority for Classified Information Security (DSIK), are examples of agencies that have incorporated information security into their strategic plans for national defense. Moreover, the development of clear policies for information management and cyber protection has had a direct impact on Albania's ability to address modern threats.

The Strategic Importance of Information Security for Albania. In Albania's case, the major transformations in the concept of security since the declaration of independence (1912) up to the present day reflect a shift from traditional approaches toward a greater integration of technology and information (Duka, 2012). For example, during the communist regime, control over information and its use for internal security was central to the national strategy (Kaplan, 2015). In the modern era, information has become a strategic resource for every state.

In the post-communist period, Albania has invested in upgrading its cyber capabilities and integrating technology into its defense policies. NATO membership has played a key role in this regard, helping align Albania with international cyber security standards (NATO, 2021). Ensuring the security of information is critical

for safeguarding national interests and political and social stability. DSIK, as the national authority responsible for protecting classified information, has a broad mandate to ensure that sensitive data are handled and protected according to international standards.

The Impact of Information Security on the National Security Concept. The evolution of Albanian military thought reflects a changing approach to information security. In the early periods, Albanian military strategies were focused on using traditional resources for territorial defense. However, the political and social changes after the 1990s highlighted the need for a restructuring of strategic thinking to include technology and information as key components (Fischer, 2009). The creation of the National Cyber Security Center is a clear example of efforts to enhance national capabilities in this area. As Duka (2012) points out, the growth of cyber capacities and their inclusion in security doctrines have laid a new foundation for national defense.

Challenges and Opportunities for Information Security in Albania. Albania still faces significant challenges in information security. Its technological infrastructure remains imperfect, and there is a pronounced shortage of trained human resources to manage cyber threats. Additionally, coordination between national institutions and international partners often remains a challenge. On the other hand, Albania has numerous opportunities for improvement. Cooperation with NATO and the EU to develop joint information security strategies can help strengthen national capacities (NATO, 2021). Continuous training and investments in modern technology are also essential for tackling evolving threats. Information security is a key component of national security, one that has taken on particular importance in the digital age. In Albania's case, integrating this element into military thought and national strategy represents a necessary evolution to address the requirements of the 21st century. By investing in technology and cooperating with international partners, Albania has opportunities to enhance its national defense and contribute to regional stability.

Conclusions

The evolution of Albania's security concept clearly reflects the historical, political, and military dynamics that have shaped the country's national defense and role within the international system for more than a century. From the early period of independence, when the primary focus was the preservation of national sovereignty, to the major transformations following the collapse of communism and accession to NATO, Albania has undergone critical phases that have defined

its strategies and approaches to security. During the communist period, the national security concept was largely based on an isolated defensive approach, which involved widespread popular mobilization and the construction of extensive defense infrastructure. Although this approach mirrored the threats and self-reliance prevalent at that time, the political and social changes after the 1990s required a complete reorientation toward a strategy rooted in international cooperation and the modernization of capacities.

Albania's accession to NATO in 2009 marked a turning point for its national security concept. This achievement not only transformed the country's strategic outlook—emphasizing the commitment to collective security—but also positioned Albania as an active contributor to international peace and stability operations. Participation in global and regional missions has solidified Albania's reputation as an engaged actor in international security. In the 21st century, Albania faces complex challenges, including terrorism, cyber security, and organized crime. To address these threats, Albania has undertaken significant steps to enhance technological capacities, establish specialized structures, and strengthen cooperation with international partners. Nevertheless, challenges persist, and the need for continuous modernization, personnel training, and investment in critical defense infrastructure remains essential to ensure a sustainable and effective security system.

The future of Albania's security concept will depend on its ability to adapt its strategies to modern threats and maintain a strong commitment to international cooperation. Future research could benefit from a detailed examination of Albania's role in the regional security architecture and its impact as a stabilizing factor in the Western Balkans. Additionally, deeper analysis of technological capacities and strategies for managing hybrid threats would further aid the development of Albania's national security strategies. In conclusion, the importance of the national security concept for Albania's future lies in its capacity to meet contemporary security demands and to contribute to international peace and stability. With a continued focus on innovation, modernization, and partnerships, Albania has the potential to reinforce its position as a reliable actor in the international system and to foster a stable and inclusive security environment.

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Progress, Challenges, and Comparative Insights regarding the Implementation of Domestic Violence Legislation in Albania _____

_____ *Entela KADRIU* _____

Abstract

This study evaluates Albania's legislative framework addressing domestic violence, focusing on the implementation and impact of Law No. 9669 and its amendments from 2020 to 2022. It examines the systemic and cultural barriers hindering effective enforcement and aligns findings with international best practices to provide actionable insights for policymakers.

A mixed-methods approach is employed, incorporating quantitative analysis of official records from the Ministry of Justice and a detailed examination of legislative texts. The study also includes a comparative analysis of Albania's framework with practices in Sweden, Poland, and Australia to contextualize Albania's challenges and opportunities.

The study reveals significant progress in legislative alignment with international standards, including the Istanbul Convention and CEDAW. However, enforcement gaps, resource constraints, and societal stigma undermine the framework's effectiveness. Judicial inconsistencies, high rates of dismissed protective orders, and limited access to shelters disproportionately affect rural areas. Comparative insights highlight opportunities for Albania to enhance its response through coordinated approaches, increased funding, and public awareness campaigns.

The analysis relies on quantitative data and lacks survivor narratives, which could provide deeper insights. The timeframe (2020–2022) limits the assessment of long-

term trends. Future research should incorporate longitudinal data and qualitative perspectives to complement these findings.

This study bridges gaps in understanding Albania's legislative response to domestic violence, offering a nuanced evaluation of its implementation challenges. It contributes to the global discourse on gender-based violence by situating Albania's progress and barriers within an international framework.

Keywords: *Domestic violence, Albania, gender-based violence, legislative framework, implementation, international comparisons*

1. Introduction

Domestic violence, a pervasive societal issue, remains a critical concern in Albania due to its deep-seated historical and cultural roots. The Kanun—a customary legal framework historically governing northern Albania—entrenched patriarchal dominance, relegating women to subordinate roles within the family and society. Under this system, violence against women, including domestic violence, was treated as a private matter, rendering survivors invisible and without recourse (Gjuraj, 2016). While the Kanun no longer holds legal authority, its legacy continues to shape societal attitudes, perpetuating gender inequality and normalizing domestic violence in certain communities.

The democratization of Albania in the early 1990s marked a turning point in addressing gender-based violence. The adoption of international conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) signaled a commitment to advancing women's rights. This culminated in the enactment of Law No. 9669 in 2006, Albania's first comprehensive legislative framework to combat domestic violence. Over the years, the law has undergone significant amendments, including updates in 2010, 2018, and 2020, aimed at expanding protections for survivors and aligning with international standards (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2021).

Despite these legislative strides, systemic barriers persist. Judicial inconsistencies, coupled with limited public awareness and the enduring influence of patriarchal norms, undermine the effective implementation of these laws. For instance, rural areas—where traditional values often dominate—report significantly lower rates of domestic violence cases, highlighting gaps in legal access and enforcement mechanisms (UN Women, 2022).

This article critically examines Albania's legislative framework on domestic violence, with a particular focus on Law No. 9669 and its amendments, to evaluate their effectiveness and alignment with international standards. By analyzing official statistics and case studies, it explores the systemic challenges in enforcement, such

as judicial inconsistencies, resource limitations, and societal barriers that hinder progress. Furthermore, through comparisons with successful practices in other countries, the study offers actionable insights to strengthen Albania's approach to combating domestic violence. In doing so, it aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on gender equality and human rights, providing a roadmap for a more effective response to domestic violence.

2. Literature review

Domestic and gender-based violence (DGBV) has emerged as a critical global issue, affecting societies irrespective of their cultural, economic, or legal frameworks. Legislative measures, societal attitudes, and enforcement mechanisms play pivotal roles in shaping national responses to this pervasive problem. By situating Albania's approach to DGBV within an international context, this review highlights the successes and shortcomings of legislative frameworks in combating DGBV while drawing important parallels to Albania's unique cultural and institutional challenges.

Globally, legislative responses to DGBV have evolved significantly, reflecting growing recognition of its widespread impact. Italy, for example, introduced the "Red Code" law to expedite judicial processes in domestic violence cases, ensuring timely protection for victims. While this policy has improved immediate interventions, its effectiveness hinges on adequate judicial resources and societal support (Bettio & Ticci, 2017). Similarly, Poland's approach to DGBV emphasizes the immediate removal of perpetrators from shared homes following reported incidents, reducing the risk of repeat offenses. However, inconsistent application and a lack of uniform enforcement protocols have limited its overall impact (Grzyb et al., 2018). These examples provide valuable lessons for Albania, where legal provisions such as emergency protection orders under Law No. 9669 encounter similar enforcement challenges, particularly in rural regions with limited institutional capacity.

The role of societal attitudes in shaping responses to DGBV cannot be overstated. In Sweden, progressive gender norms have fostered comprehensive DGBV policies that emphasize prevention and survivor support (Heimer et al., 2018). Contrastingly, deeply ingrained patriarchal norms in countries like Albania and Poland have created environments where survivors face significant barriers to seeking help. In Albania, for instance, cultural stigmas often discourage victims from reporting abuse or pursuing legal recourse, particularly in rural areas where traditional values dominate (UN Women, 2022). While Sweden's success demonstrates the importance of societal transformation in addressing DGBV, Albania's experience underscores the urgent need for targeted education and

public awareness campaigns to challenge harmful cultural norms and empower survivors.

A recurring theme across the literature is the gap between legislative frameworks and their enforcement. In Australia, the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children provides an integrated strategy combining prevention, intervention, and survivor support, demonstrating the effectiveness of coordinated multi-stakeholder efforts (Our Watch, 2019). This model contrasts sharply with Albania's fragmented approach, where coordination among law enforcement, judicial bodies, and social services remains a significant challenge. The limited availability of resources, especially in rural areas, exacerbates these issues, leaving many survivors without adequate support (UNDP, 2021). Integrating lessons from Australia's model, such as multidisciplinary teams and sustained financial investments, could strengthen Albania's institutional response to DGBV.

Comparative studies highlight the critical role of victim support systems in ensuring long-term recovery and reintegration. Sweden's government-funded shelters, counseling services, and housing programs provide survivors with comprehensive support, showcasing a robust model for victim-centered care (Heimer et al., 2018). In contrast, Albania's limited resources and uneven distribution of support services create significant disparities, with rural victims facing the greatest obstacles to accessing help. Bridging this gap requires sustained investments and partnerships with non-governmental organizations to establish a more equitable and accessible support system (Our Watch, 2019; UN Women, 2022).

While Albania has made notable progress in aligning its domestic violence laws with international standards, such as the Istanbul Convention, challenges in enforcement, societal acceptance, and resource allocation persist. The literature underscores that Albania's response to DGBV must go beyond legislative reforms to address systemic and cultural barriers effectively. By learning from successful models in countries like Sweden and Australia, Albania can strengthen its approach to combating domestic violence, ensuring both the protection of survivors and the accountability of perpetrators.

3. Methodology

This paper utilizes a mixed-methods approach to evaluate Albania's legislative framework addressing domestic violence, focusing on the implementation and impact of Law No. 9669 and its amendments. The research draws on quantitative data and a comprehensive analysis of legal texts and official records to provide a detailed examination of the progress made and the challenges that persist.

Quantitative data were obtained from official reports and statistics published by the Ministry of Justice. These data encompass the number of protective orders issued, approved, dismissed, or denied under Article 10 of Law No. 9669, as well as demographic and regional distributions of domestic violence cases from 2020 to 2022. By analyzing these figures, the study identifies trends in the utilization and enforcement of legal protections and highlights disparities between urban and rural areas.

In addition to the analysis of statistical data, the study conducts a detailed examination of Albania's legislative framework through the review of legal texts, including Law No. 9669, amendments to the Penal Code, and Law No. 125/2020. This legal review evaluates the alignment of domestic legislation with international standards such as the Istanbul Convention and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Emphasis is placed on identifying gaps in the laws, particularly in addressing coercive control and psychological abuse, and on assessing the adequacy of enforcement mechanisms.

To contextualize Albania's legislative and enforcement practices, the study incorporates a comparative analysis with other countries, including Italy, Poland, Sweden, and Australia. These comparisons highlight effective practices, such as expedited judicial processes in Italy and multidisciplinary approaches in Australia, which offer valuable lessons for Albania. This analysis situates Albania's challenges within a global framework, emphasizing areas where policy and practice can be improved.

By combining statistical data, legal analysis, and international comparisons, the study provides a comprehensive evaluation of Albania's approach to domestic violence. This methodology ensures a thorough understanding of the systemic and cultural factors influencing the effectiveness of legal protections and offers actionable insights for policymakers and advocates.

4. Results

Albania's legislative framework addressing domestic and gender-based violence has undergone significant development, shaped by both domestic socio-political demands and international commitments. This framework includes critical legal instruments such as Law no. 9669/2006 on "Measures Against Domestic Violence," amendments to the Penal Code, and mechanisms introduced under Law no. 125/2020. These efforts reflect Albania's alignment with international standards, including the Istanbul Convention and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). However, while these laws mark progress, their effectiveness depends on implementation, enforcement, and accessibility for victims.

Law no. 9669/2006 on “Measures Against Domestic Violence” was one of the first legislative efforts to provide a civil administrative mechanism aimed at addressing domestic violence. This law prioritizes immediate interventions to protect victims and prevent further violence, primarily through the issuance of protection orders and urgent protection orders. These orders, which courts are required to issue within 48 hours of receiving a complaint, aim to provide victims with immediate security.

Despite its procedural strengths, such as the ability for victims to access protection orders without incurring financial costs, the law faces several implementation challenges. One of the primary concerns is the inconsistent enforcement of protection orders, particularly in rural and underserved regions where law enforcement and judicial infrastructure are weaker. This inconsistency undermines the law’s effectiveness, leaving victims vulnerable to continued abuse. Additionally, while the law defines a broad range of abusive behaviors, including psychological, physical, sexual, and economic violence, it relies heavily on the capacity of law enforcement agencies and social services, which often lack adequate training and resources to handle cases of domestic violence comprehensively.

The Penal Code has been amended over the years to criminalize various forms of domestic violence and gender-based violence explicitly. These amendments demonstrate Albania’s intent to treat domestic violence not just as a social issue but as a criminal offense requiring state intervention. The Penal Code includes provisions addressing physical violence, sexual assault, and marital rape. However, gaps remain, particularly in addressing coercive control and psychological abuse, which are critical components of domestic violence yet harder to quantify and prosecute. The cultural stigma surrounding reporting and prosecuting domestic violence further compounds these legal gaps, as victims often face societal pressures to remain silent or reconcile with their abusers.

Law no. 125/2020 represents a more recent legislative effort to address gender-based violence comprehensively. This law expands the scope of protections available to victims and strengthens institutional mechanisms for their support. It also emphasizes the role of local government units in preventing violence and providing support services. While this law is more holistic in its approach, its implementation faces significant resource-related challenges. Many local government units lack the financial and human resources necessary to fulfill their obligations under the law, such as establishing shelters, offering psychological support, and ensuring legal aid.

Albania’s legislative framework is heavily influenced by international conventions such as the Istanbul Convention, which it ratified in 2013. The Istanbul Convention obliges states to adopt comprehensive measures to prevent violence, protect victims, and prosecute perpetrators. While Albania has made notable progress in aligning its laws with these obligations, the gap between

legislative intent and practical implementation remains significant. For example, the Istanbul Convention emphasizes the importance of integrated policies and multidisciplinary approaches, yet coordination among Albania's law enforcement agencies, judicial bodies, and social services remains fragmented.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) also plays a crucial role in shaping Albania's legislative and policy frameworks. CEDAW requires state parties to address gender-based violence as a form of discrimination that impairs women's human rights. Albania has incorporated these principles into its legal framework, but the societal and institutional barriers to reporting and addressing domestic violence often undermine the realization of these rights.

4.1. Analysis of Domestic Violence data in Albania (2020–2022)

Law No. 9669 on measures against domestic violence outlines comprehensive protective measures for victims, emphasizing immediate and long-term interventions. Article 10 specifically enumerates emergency protective measures aimed at preventing further harm to victims. These measures include restraining orders to prevent the perpetrator from contacting or threatening the victim, removal of the abuser from the shared residence, and restricting their proximity to the victim's home or workplace. Additional provisions ensure the confiscation of weapons, temporary custody of children, and placement of victims in shelters (UNDP, 2021). Article 13 categorizes the parties subject to protective measures and assigns responsibilities to public and private entities involved in enforcement, rehabilitation, and victim support.

The fight against domestic violence in Albania is primarily legislated under Law No. 9669, enacted in 2006 and subsequently amended to address gaps in its original framework. The law reflects Albania's efforts to comply with international obligations, including the Violence and Harassment Convention No. 190 and the European Pillar of Social Rights (Shehaj, 2020; ILO, 2017). Its central provisions, outlined in Articles 10 and 13, aim to protect victims and ensure accountability for offenders through comprehensive protective measures and institutional responsibilities. Article 10 introduces a wide range of protective measures, including restraining orders to prevent perpetrators from contacting or threatening victims; immediate removal of abusers from shared residences, irrespective of property rights; temporary custody of children and restrictions on parental visitation rights and seizure of weapons and mandatory participation in psychosocial rehabilitation programs (Law No. 9669). These measures prioritize victim safety while mandating proactive steps to address the root causes of abusive behavior. However, enforcement has proven challenging. Noncompliance with rehabilitation orders is widespread, with many offenders evading mandated

programs. This undermines efforts to rehabilitate offenders and reduce recidivism (Dhuli, 2013). Article 13 complements these provisions by defining the roles of public and private institutions in implementing protective measures. Local law enforcement, social services, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are tasked with enforcing court orders and providing support to victims. However, resource constraints and uneven institutional capacity hinder effective collaboration, particularly in rural areas (Mecaj, 2016).

Data from the Ministry of Justice provides a quantitative perspective on the implementation of protective measures. In 2020, 1,052 protective orders were issued under Article 10, with 548 approvals, 204 dismissals, and 300 denials. The following year, 1,078 protective orders were recorded, including 567 approvals, 205 dismissals, and 306 denials. A similar trend was observed in the first quarter of 2022, where 225 orders were issued, with 130 approvals, 50 dismissals, and 45 denials. These figures reflect an increasing reliance on legal remedies but also highlight judicial inconsistencies and barriers to justice (Ministry of Justice, 2022).

Despite the legislative framework's robustness, challenges remain in enforcement and societal acceptance. Many cases fail to proceed due to insufficient evidence, lack of awareness among victims about their rights, or reluctance to report abuse due to societal stigmas. Rural areas, in particular, exhibit lower reporting rates, attributed to deeply ingrained cultural norms and limited access to legal resources. Moreover, the high rate of dismissed and denied cases underscores the need for better training for judicial personnel and standardized guidelines for evaluating domestic violence cases (EIGE, 2020).

The demographic distribution of domestic violence victims reveals significant patterns. Victims are predominantly women, with most incidents occurring within marital relationships. Statistics from 2021 indicate that women accounted for over 80% of victims seeking protective orders, reflecting the gendered nature of domestic violence (Tirana Judicial District Court, 2022). Younger women aged 26–35 represent the most affected group, often experiencing abuse linked to financial stress, familial conflicts, or power dynamics within relationships.

Victims residing in urban areas report higher rates of domestic violence compared to those in rural regions. This disparity can be attributed to increased reporting rates in cities, where victims have greater access to support services and legal resources. However, the lack of such infrastructure in rural areas contributes to underreporting, perpetuating a cycle of silence and vulnerability (Gjuraj, 2016).

Article 10 mandates psychosocial rehabilitation programs for perpetrators, organized by public and private entities. Compliance monitoring is conducted through periodic reports submitted to local coordinators for domestic violence cases. However, noncompliance remains a significant issue. Perpetrators often evade participation in rehabilitation programs, citing logistical challenges or lack of awareness. This noncompliance hinders efforts to break the cycle of abuse and reintegrate offenders into society responsibly (UNDP, 2021).

Data for 2022 reveals quarterly trends in the issuance of protective orders. In the period from January to March, 225 orders were issued under Article 10, with 130 approvals. Between April and June, this number increased to 332, including 153 approvals. By July to September, 250 orders were issued, with 98 approvals. These fluctuations indicate both an increased awareness of legal remedies and persistent systemic barriers affecting the resolution of cases (Ministry of Justice, 2022).

Urban centers like Tirana report the highest rates of domestic violence, reflecting greater accessibility to legal and support services. Conversely, rural areas show significantly lower reporting rates, indicative of systemic underreporting due to cultural norms and logistical challenges. The majority of victims are married women, often with young children, highlighting the compounded vulnerabilities faced by this demographic (Tirana Judicial District Court, 2022).

Cultural norms in Albania often perpetuate myths about domestic violence, such as attributing it to substance abuse or financial stress, rather than recognizing it as a systemic issue rooted in power dynamics and gender inequality. Media coverage occasionally reinforces these stereotypes, trivializing domestic violence as a private matter and undermining the societal urgency required to address it (EIGE, 2020).

Albania has made significant strides in aligning its domestic violence legislation with international standards. The country's adoption of measures under the Violence and Harassment Convention No. 190 and its efforts to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights demonstrate a commitment to addressing gender-based violence (Shehaj, 2020; ILO, 2017). However, when compared to neighboring countries, Albania still lags in areas such as judicial training, offender rehabilitation, and victim support infrastructure.

For instance, while Albania mandates comprehensive protective measures, the lack of resources and institutional capacity often undermines their implementation. In contrast, countries with stronger social welfare systems and dedicated funding for victim support programs, such as Serbia and North Macedonia, report higher rates of successful enforcement (Rakočević et al., 2012).

Data show that one of the most pressing challenges in the legislative framework is the lack of consistent enforcement of protective measures. Although the laws mandate swift judicial action and provide mechanisms for victim support, these measures are often ineffective due to limited institutional capacity, especially in rural areas. Law enforcement officers and judicial authorities frequently lack the specialized training necessary to handle domestic violence cases sensitively and effectively. Furthermore, the reliance on victims to initiate legal proceedings places a significant burden on those who may already be vulnerable or fearful of retribution.

Another significant issue is the lack of funding and resources for support services such as shelters, counseling, and legal aid. While the law envisions a

robust support system for victims, the reality is that many municipalities and local government units lack the capacity to provide these services. This gap disproportionately affects women in rural and marginalized communities, where access to legal and social support is already limited.

Cultural factors also pose significant barriers to the effective implementation of domestic violence laws. Deeply ingrained patriarchal attitudes and societal stigma surrounding domestic violence discourage victims from seeking help or pursuing justice. This cultural context not only affects victims but also influences the attitudes of law enforcement and judicial personnel, who may prioritize reconciliation over accountability.

While Albania has made commendable progress in establishing a legislative framework to address domestic and gender-based violence, significant challenges remain. The laws themselves are largely aligned with international standards, but their implementation is hindered by systemic issues such as inconsistent enforcement, lack of resources, and cultural barriers. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that includes improving institutional capacity, enhancing coordination among stakeholders, increasing funding for victim support services, and fostering cultural change to reduce the stigma associated with domestic violence.

5. Discussions

Albania's legislative framework, particularly Law No. 9669 and its amendments, reflects a commitment to addressing domestic violence through alignment with international conventions such as the Istanbul Convention and CEDAW. However, when compared to similar countries in the region and beyond, critical gaps remain in enforcement and victim support infrastructure. For instance, Poland's immediate removal of perpetrators from shared residences has been cited as an effective deterrent, yet similar provisions in Albania often falter due to inconsistent enforcement and resource limitations. This inconsistency disproportionately affects rural areas, where the lack of shelters and support services undermines the protective intent of such measures. In contrast, Sweden exemplifies the integration of progressive gender norms and comprehensive victim support systems, including government-funded shelters and long-term rehabilitation programs. Albania could benefit from adopting elements of Sweden's model, particularly the establishment of sustainable funding mechanisms for victim support services. Similarly, Australia's coordinated National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women emphasizes prevention, stakeholder collaboration, and significant financial investments, offering a roadmap for Albania to improve coordination among its law enforcement, judiciary, and social services.

Countries such as Italy have introduced expedited judicial processes for domestic violence cases under the “Red Code” law, reducing delays in granting protective orders and ensuring timely interventions. While Albania’s Article 10 provides a similar framework for emergency protection orders, delays in enforcement and judicial inconsistencies reduce its efficacy. Drawing lessons from Italy, Albania could prioritize judicial training and streamline procedural requirements to enhance the responsiveness of its legal system.

The analysis of Albania’s domestic violence data from 2020 to 2022 demonstrates both significant progress and persistent challenges in addressing domestic and gender-based violence (DGBV). While legal frameworks such as Law No. 9669 and its amendments aim to align Albania’s efforts with international standards, data trends and comparative insights highlight critical enforcement gaps and systemic barriers. The Ministry of Justice records indicate a steady reliance on legal remedies, with 1,052 protective orders issued in 2020, 1,078 in 2021, and 907 during the first three quarters of 2022. Approval rates have remained consistent, with approximately 55% of protective orders granted each year. However, dismissals and denials—accounting for nearly 45% of cases—reflect judicial inconsistencies and potential underreporting due to victims’ reluctance to pursue legal action (Ministry of Justice, 2022). Similar patterns are observed in rural areas, where logistical challenges, stigma, and inadequate access to legal resources further exacerbate underreporting (UNDP, 2021).

When compared to international data, Albania’s rates of protective order issuance align with trends in other low- and middle-income countries, where systemic barriers hinder the full utilization of legal frameworks (Grzyb et al., 2018). However, the higher dismissal rates suggest a need for improved training for judicial personnel to assess domestic violence cases effectively and apply standardized criteria in protective order evaluations. In countries like Sweden, comprehensive victim support systems—backed by sustainable funding—have significantly improved enforcement outcomes (Heimer et al., 2018). For instance, Sweden’s government-funded shelters and counseling services ensure equitable access for survivors, irrespective of their geographic location. In contrast, Albania’s lack of resources for shelters and psychosocial services disproportionately affects victims in rural regions, perpetuating cycles of abuse (EIGE, 2020). Poland’s approach to removing perpetrators from shared residences following incidents of violence offers another point of comparison. Studies suggest this measure reduces repeat offenses by limiting victims’ exposure to abusers (Grzyb et al., 2018). However, Albania’s enforcement of similar provisions under Law No. 9669 has been inconsistent, with noncompliance and logistical challenges undermining their effectiveness (Dhuli, 2013). Australia’s National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women emphasizes a coordinated response involving law enforcement, social services, and community organizations (Our Watch, 2019). Albania’s fragmented

coordination among these stakeholders contrasts sharply, highlighting the need for a multidisciplinary approach. Implementing integrated case management systems could enhance Albania's ability to address domestic violence comprehensively.

Cultural norms in Albania continue to play a significant role in shaping the response to domestic violence. Patriarchal attitudes, compounded by stigma and victim-blaming, discourage women from seeking help or reporting abuse (Gjuraj, 2016). These barriers are particularly pronounced in rural areas, where traditional values often deter survivors from pursuing legal remedies. Comparative studies in Poland and Italy underscore the importance of public awareness campaigns in addressing such barriers. For instance, Italy's "Break the Silence" initiative successfully increased reporting rates by normalizing conversations about domestic violence and highlighting available support services (Bettio & Ticci, 2017).

In Albania, media coverage of domestic violence cases has sometimes trivialized the issue, reinforcing stereotypes that frame violence as a private matter rather than a systemic problem (UN Women, 2022). Addressing these cultural barriers through targeted education campaigns and collaborations with community leaders could foster a more supportive environment for survivors.

Judicial inconsistencies in protective order approvals and enforcement highlight the urgent need for specialized training for judges and law enforcement personnel. Similar challenges in Canada, where victim attrition undermines legal protections, have been mitigated through comprehensive training programs that emphasize sensitivity and victim-centered practices (Johnson & Dawson, 2011). Adopting such programs in Albania could improve judicial decision-making and reduce attrition rates.

The gaps identified in Albania's framework underscore the need for systemic reforms to strengthen the enforcement of domestic violence laws and align with international standards. A key implication is the importance of addressing the resource constraints that hinder the effective implementation of laws. Insufficient funding for victim support services, particularly in rural areas, creates significant disparities in access to justice and protection. Policy reforms must include increased budgetary allocations for shelters, counseling services, and legal aid to ensure equitable access for all survivors.

Furthermore, the cultural barriers that perpetuate domestic violence require targeted interventions through public awareness campaigns and education initiatives. Deeply ingrained patriarchal attitudes and societal stigmas discourage victims from seeking help and often lead to judicial leniency in domestic violence cases. Lessons from countries like Sweden highlight the importance of societal transformation in fostering an environment where victims feel empowered to report abuse and pursue justice. Albania must prioritize efforts to challenge harmful norms and build public trust in its legal system.

Another critical implication is the need for improved inter-agency coordination. The fragmented implementation of domestic violence laws in Albania—marked by limited collaboration between law enforcement, judicial bodies, and social services—undermines the effectiveness of protective measures. Adopting multidisciplinary approaches, as seen in Australia and Poland, could enhance Albania’s capacity to manage domestic violence cases comprehensively. This includes specialized training for law enforcement and judicial personnel to ensure victim-centered approaches and eliminate biases.

Albania’s alignment with international conventions, while commendable, requires sustained effort to bridge the gap between legislative intent and practical implementation. The country’s adherence to the Istanbul Convention mandates the integration of prevention, protection, and prosecution measures within a cohesive policy framework. By focusing on these pillars and learning from successful models, Albania can strengthen its legislative response and provide a more robust safety net for survivors of domestic violence.

6. Limitations

This study provides a comprehensive evaluation of Albania’s legislative framework addressing domestic violence and its enforcement from 2020 to 2022. However, several limitations must be acknowledged, which may affect the scope and generalizability of the findings.

First, the analysis relies heavily on quantitative data sourced from official records provided by the Ministry of Justice and judicial district courts. While these data offer valuable insights into the trends and outcomes of protective orders, they may not fully capture the extent of domestic violence in Albania, particularly in rural areas where underreporting remains a significant challenge. Cultural stigma and limited access to legal resources often deter victims from seeking formal legal remedies, potentially leading to an underestimation of the issue’s prevalence.

Second, the study focuses primarily on the legislative framework and its enforcement mechanisms, with less emphasis on the lived experiences of survivors. While the quantitative approach provides a robust understanding of systemic trends, it does not offer qualitative insights into the barriers victims face when engaging with the legal system or accessing support services. Future research incorporating survivor narratives and stakeholder interviews would complement the findings and provide a more nuanced understanding of these challenges.

Third, the comparative analysis, while informative, is limited to a selection of countries chosen for their relevance to Albania’s context. Broader comparisons with other countries, particularly those with similar socio-economic conditions,

could provide additional insights into best practices and innovative solutions applicable to Albania.

Lastly, the study spans a relatively short timeframe, focusing on data from 2020 to 2022. Although this period captures recent trends, it does not allow for an assessment of long-term impacts of legislative changes or the evolution of enforcement practices. Extending the analysis to include longitudinal data would offer a more comprehensive evaluation of progress and challenges over time.

Despite these limitations, the study provides critical insights into the systemic and cultural barriers hindering the effective implementation of domestic violence laws in Albania. These findings serve as a foundation for further research and policy development aimed at strengthening Albania's response to domestic and gender-based violence.

7. Conclusions

This study highlights significant progress in Albania's efforts to address domestic violence through legislative reforms and alignment with international standards. Laws such as Law No. 9669 and its amendments demonstrate a commitment to protecting survivors and holding perpetrators accountable. However, the analysis also underscores persistent gaps in enforcement, resource allocation, and societal acceptance, which continue to hinder the realization of these legal protections.

The findings reveal critical disparities in enforcement, particularly in rural areas, where limited institutional capacity and deeply ingrained cultural norms exacerbate underreporting and reduce access to justice. Judicial inconsistencies, high rates of dismissed or denied protective orders, and insufficient funding for support services further highlight the systemic barriers to effective implementation. These challenges emphasize the need for a coordinated, multidisciplinary approach to managing domestic violence cases, integrating legal, social, and cultural strategies.

Comparative insights from countries such as Sweden, Poland, and Australia offer valuable lessons for Albania. Sweden's comprehensive victim support systems, Poland's immediate removal of perpetrators, and Australia's integrated national plan illustrate the importance of sustained investments, stakeholder collaboration, and cultural transformation. Adopting similar practices could significantly enhance Albania's response to domestic violence.

The study concludes that bridging the gap between legislative intent and practical outcomes requires a multifaceted approach. This includes improving judicial training, increasing funding for victim support services, and fostering public awareness campaigns to challenge harmful cultural norms. By addressing these systemic and cultural barriers, Albania can strengthen its legislative

framework and move closer to achieving a society where survivors of domestic violence are fully protected, and perpetrators are held accountable.

These conclusions serve as a call to action for policymakers, advocates, and stakeholders to prioritize sustained investments and comprehensive strategies in combating domestic violence. Future research should focus on longitudinal analyses, survivor-centered approaches, and expanded comparative studies to continue building a robust evidence base for informed policy development.

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Laws and Conventions

Law No. 9669, “On Measures Against Domestic Violence,” Republic of Albania, enacted 2006, with amendments in 2010, 2018, and 2020.

Article 10 of Law No. 9669, protective measures include restraining orders and the removal of perpetrators from shared residences (Law No. 9669/2006).

Article 13 of the same law outlines the responsibilities of public and private institutions in enforcing protective measures (Law No. 9669/2006).

Law No. 125/2020, “On Amendments to the Penal Code of the Republic of Albania.”

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly.

Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence), opened for signature in 2011, ratified by Albania in 2013.

Violence and Harassment Convention No. 190, International Labour Organization (ILO), adopted 2019.

Smart Defense: A Contemporary Model for the Common Security of Albania and Kosovo

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the evolution of the defense concept from a traditional approach to the new concept of “Smart Defense,” with a particular focus on Albania and Kosovo as key security actors in the Balkan region. Initially, the paper explores the foundations of traditional defense, which relied heavily on national sovereignty and military power as the primary means of protection against external threats. Through historical and doctrinal analysis, the limitations of this approach are examined in addressing a new security environment characterized by increasingly complex, asymmetric, and transnational threats. The paper highlights the key factors driving the transformation of the global security landscape, including technological advancements, cyber threats, global terrorism, and geopolitical shifts. In this context, the concept of “Smart Defense,” promoted by NATO, is introduced as an integrated and innovative approach to addressing modern security challenges. By analyzing bilateral and regional cooperation between Albania and Kosovo, the potential of this approach to build a joint defense architecture based on the effective utilization of resources and technology is discussed. A detailed comparison between the traditional approach and “Smart Defense” highlights the advantages of the latter in enhancing effectiveness, coordination, and collaboration among states. Through case studies and practical examples from the region and beyond, the paper explores the successful applications and challenges encountered in adopting this strategy. Finally, the paper

identifies the key challenges faced by Albania and Kosovo in fully integrating the “Smart Defense” concept and provides strategic recommendations for adapting defense policies to meet the demands of the contemporary security environment.

Key words: *Smart Defense, traditional defense, security challenges, geopolitical shifts, cyber threats, military power, transnational threats*

Introduction

In recent decades, Albania and many other countries in the world have experienced profound changes in their concept of defense and security. Traditionally, defense has been seen as a direct task of the armed forces to protect national sovereignty and territory from external threats. In Albania, this approach has been rooted in military history and doctrine since the Cold War period, when the country was part of the communist camp and focused mainly on defense against perceived external enemies (Duka, 2012). However, recent developments in the global security environment and Albania’s membership in NATO have prompted the need to review this traditional approach and adopt more advanced concepts such as “Smart Defense”. The importance of this topic for our country lies in its context as a small country with limited resources, but with significant responsibilities for collective security within the NATO framework. The Smart Defense approach, which aims to maximize the use of resources through international cooperation and advanced technologies, is an opportunity for Albania and other similar countries to improve defense capabilities without the need for massive investments in traditional weapons and military equipment (Fischer, 2009). This topic is of particular importance for national security and for Albania’s role in the global security architecture.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the evolution of the concept of defense in Albania, focusing on the transition from the traditional approach to Smart Defense. This analysis includes examining the challenges the country faces in this process and the opportunities that Smart Defense offers to face modern threats. The paper also aims to answer the main question: What are the main challenges for the implementation of Smart Defense in Albania, and how can they be overcome? To achieve these goals, the paper will use a qualitative methodology, which includes a review of the scientific literature on defense and security in Albania and in the international context. Also, a comparative analysis will be made between the country’s traditional defense policies and its efforts to adopt Smart Defense, especially after NATO membership. One of the main sources that will be used for this analysis are NATO strategic reports and defense policy documents published by the Albanian government. This approach allows for an in-depth examination

of defense policies and the challenges facing Albania in the era of Smart Defense (Orford, 2016).

Albania's use of the Smart Defense approach is an important step in modernizing its defense capabilities and adapting to new global security challenges. Smart Defense aims to maximize the use of national resources through close cooperation with NATO allies and the more effective use of new technologies (Weiss, 2018). Albania, as a country with limited resources, has benefited from this concept, contributing to NATO joint operations and strengthening its role in regional and international security. However, the full implementation of Smart Defense requires significant challenges, including the modernization of military infrastructure and the integration of new technologies.

One of the main challenges for Albania is its limited financial and technological capacity, which may hinder the successful implementation of Smart Defense. However, through assistance from international partners and its engagement in NATO collective defense projects, Albania can compensate for these limitations and benefit from a more coordinated and advanced defense approach (Kaplan, 2015). The use of new technology, such as drones and advanced air defense systems, can help Albania improve its defense capabilities without major investments in traditional forces. In conclusion, Albania's transition from a traditional defense approach to Smart Defense represents an important step towards adapting to the modern security environment. This process is important not only for Albania's national security, but also for its role within the NATO framework and in the global security architecture. Despite the major challenges, Smart Defense offers a unique opportunity for Albania to modernize its defense and contribute to regional and international security. "Future wars will require a blend of traditional military power and technological capability, and Smart Defense is the path to that blend." Thompson, L. (2013).

The traditional concept of defense in Albania: history, sovereignty and the role of the armed Forces

National defense has always been an essential aspect of state policies, especially for countries that have experienced constant threats to their sovereignty. In Albania, the concept of defense has undergone profound transformations due to the historical and geopolitical contexts of the country. The traditional defense approach, based mainly on national sovereignty and territorial defense, has evolved in line with international and regional changes. This article will examine the history and development of the concept of national defense in Albania, with a particular focus on sovereign defense and the role of the armed forces. It will also address the main defense doctrines and lessons learned from historical examples.

“International cooperation and resource sharing are essential in a world where no state can guarantee security alone.” Bjola, C., & Kornprobst, M. (2013).

The concept of national defense in Albania has been shaped by the country’s geopolitical position and the historical challenges it has experienced. Since the establishment of the Albanian state in 1912, defense has been a priority for Albanian governments, due to constant threats from neighbors and foreign invasions (Duka, 2012). The Balkan Wars and World War I were difficult periods for Albania, showing the weakness of the new state institutions and the lack of a well-organized army to protect territorial integrity. After World War II, Albania became a communist state under the leadership of Enver Hoxha. During this period, the concept of national defense took a new direction, focusing mainly on defense against Western and Eastern powers. National defense turned into a sovereign ideology, where the small and isolated state had to be protected from any external threat. Albania began a strong policy of militarization and the construction of bunkers throughout the territory, following the doctrine of “defense with its own forces” (Fischer, 2009). This period represents one of the most extreme phases of sovereignty and territorial defense in the modern history of the country.

Sovereign Defense and the Role of the Armed Forces. In the traditional approach to national defense, sovereignty has played a key role, making the defense of borders and territorial integrity an absolute priority. In Albania, this concept was particularly emphasized during the communist period, when the country was in international isolation and faced real and perceived threats from neighbors and great powers. National sovereignty became a key element of security policies, influencing the country’s military doctrines and defense strategies. And this at a time when “Modern technology has fundamentally changed the nature of war, fostering the need for cooperation and innovation in defense.” Boot, M. (2006).

The Albanian armed forces have played a central role in maintaining sovereignty and protecting territorial integrity. During the communist period, the Albanian army was one of the most important sectors of the state, with a large number of conscripts and a large organization of reserves (Duka, 2012). This military structure, based mainly on territorial defense and popular resistance strategies, was in line with the national defense doctrine that focused on a decentralized defense, where every citizen would participate in the defense of the country. According to this doctrine, the defense of the country did not depend only on the professional army, but on the involvement of the entire people in a general resistance war. This idea coincided with developments during the communist era in other Eastern European countries, but in Albania it was particularly strong due to its isolation and lack of external allies. This doctrine also included the construction of bunkers and defense structures that enabled a long resistance to a possible invasion (Fischer, 2009).

Main doctrines and lessons from the past

Albanian military doctrines have been influenced by a number of factors, including historical circumstances, geopolitics, and the political ideology of different regimes. During the communist period, the main defense doctrine was “defense with one’s own forces”, which aimed to minimize the country’s dependence on international allies and guarantee its defense through domestic forces. This doctrine had a strong ideological basis, as the Hoxha regime promoted autarky and reliance on national forces as a key element for the survival of the socialist state (Kaplan, 2015). A historical example that reflects the power and limitations of this doctrine is the period of Albania’s isolation after the breakdown of relations with the Soviet Union and China. Albania was one of the few countries in the world that pursued a foreign policy of complete isolation, relying on the doctrine of national defense to guarantee the survival of the regime (Fischer, 2009). However, while this doctrine could provide some internal stability in the short term, it was unsustainable in the long term, due to the country’s economic and technological limitations.

After the fall of the communist regime in the early 1990s, Albania changed its approach to defense and security. Membership in international organizations such as NATO and cooperation with other countries to ensure national security represented a major departure from the traditional doctrine of sovereign defense (Duka, 2012). Albania began to adopt new doctrines that emphasized international cooperation and integration into collective security structures.

Thus, the traditional concept of defense in Albania has evolved from a sovereign and isolationist approach towards a more open and integrated model of collective defense. The history of Albania’s national defense shows the importance of sovereignty and territorial defense in different periods of the country’s history, especially during the communist period. However, lessons learned from historical examples show that the traditional defense approach may be limited in addressing new security challenges. As Albania moves towards integration into the international security architecture, it is clear that new doctrines and collaborative approaches are essential for the country’s defense in today’s global environment.

Changes in the international security environment and their impact on Albania

The international security environment has experienced profound changes in recent decades due to geopolitical and technological developments. Albania, as a small country in the Balkan region and a NATO member since 2009, has been

significantly affected by these transformations, which have changed the way it approaches national and regional security. Changes in the security environment include not only technological advancement and the emergence of new threats, such as cyberattacks and global terrorism, but also asymmetric threats, which have changed the defense strategies of states. Albania, as a country in transition towards modernization and Euro-Atlantic integration, has been challenged to adopt new approaches to confront new threats in the era of globalization. “Intelligent defense requires an integrated approach that combines traditional defense with new elements such as cyber and peacekeeping operations.” Collins, A. (2016).

Geopolitical and Technological Changes. Geopolitical changes have had a profound impact on the international security structure and on the strategies of small countries like Albania. After the end of the Cold War, the security worldview has changed from a bipolar one, where superpowers dominated certain regions, towards a multipolar system, where regional and non-state actors play an important role (Kaplan, 2015). The Balkan region, which has traditionally been a center of tension for great powers, has been increasingly integrated into Western security structures, including the membership of countries like Albania in NATO and efforts to join the European Union. This geopolitical transformation has offered new opportunities for stabilizing the region, but has also brought new challenges to security, especially in relation to the interventions of external actors like Russia and China, which have increased their influence in the region (Duka, 2012).

Technological changes have been another key factor influencing the security environment. Cyber technology, developments in artificial intelligence and increased global surveillance capacities have transformed the way states manage and respond to threats. In this context, Albania has begun to strengthen its capacities in cyber defense and improve its technological infrastructure to face new challenges. The cyber interventions that Albania has experienced in recent years have highlighted the need for investment in this area, especially after the major cyber attack that hit state institutions in 2022 (Fischer, 2009).

Evolution of Threats: Cyber, Terrorism, Asymmetric Threats. The evolution of security threats has significantly influenced Albania’s defense policy. In the past, threats were mainly territorial in nature and focused on protecting borders from potential military attacks. However, in the modern era, cyber threats have emerged as one of the greatest challenges to national security. Cyber attacks, which can be carried out by both state and non-state actors, have the ability to paralyze a country’s critical infrastructure, including financial, energy, and communication systems (Weiss, 2018). The cyber attack on Albania in 2022, which is believed to have been carried out by an external actor, highlighted weaknesses in the country’s cyber defenses and underscored the need for modernization and greater international cooperation in this area.

Another significant threat to Albania and the region is international terrorism. Although Albania has not faced major terrorist attacks, the Balkan region has been a source of recruitment for international terrorist groups such as ISIS, raising concerns about domestic stability and the involvement of Albanian citizens in terrorist activities abroad (Orford, 2016). To address these challenges, Albania has worked closely with NATO and other international partners to strengthen security and combat terrorist financing and recruitment. Asymmetric threats, which involve tactics that challenge traditional military powers, have also become more frequent. “Hybrid threats require a flexible and intelligent approach to defense, where countries share resources and experiences to address common challenges” (Hoffman, 2007). Such threats include organized crime activities, drug and arms smuggling, and illegal migration, which directly affect Albania due to its strategic position on the Balkan routes. To address these threats, Albania has strengthened regional cooperation and built greater capacities for border monitoring and combating organized crime (Duka, 2012).

The Defense Approach in the Age of Globalization. “The high costs of modern armaments mean that only through resource sharing and cooperation can effective defense be achieved.” Cordesman, A. H. (2014). In the era of globalization, the concept of security and defense has changed profoundly. Defense is no longer seen as an exclusive matter of national territory, but as an integrated component of international and regional security. Albania, as a member of NATO, is included in a collective defense system that aims to guarantee the security of the entire alliance in the face of global threats (Weiss, 2018). The new defense approach includes a combination of traditional military forces and advanced technologies, including cyber capabilities, air and maritime defense, and cooperation in the fields of intelligence and security. Globalization has also brought the need for a review of defense strategies, placing emphasis on international cooperation and resource sharing. Smart Defense, a concept promoted by NATO, aims to maximize the use of limited resources through close cooperation and coordination among allies (Kaplan, 2015). Albania has begun to adopt this approach, integrating its armed forces into joint NATO operations and contributing to international peacekeeping missions.

Thus, the international security environment has changed significantly due to geopolitical and technological developments, and these changes have had a major impact on Albania’s security policies. Kaldor, M. (2013). “New wars require new strategies, and Smart Defense is a response to challenges that cannot be met with traditional military forces alone.” The evolution of cyber threats, terrorism, and asymmetric threats have challenged traditional defense strategies and forced Albania to adopt more sophisticated and collaborative approaches. In the era of globalization, defense can no longer be limited to national borders, but requires deeper integration into international security structures, which Albania has begun to successfully adopt.

Smart Defense in the Albanian context: its concept and development

In today's world, where security threats are increasingly complex and interconnected, traditional national defense strategies are no longer sufficient to guarantee the security of small countries like Albania. Modern threats, such as cyberattacks, international terrorism, and asymmetric actions, require more coordinated and effective approaches to manage limited resources. In this context, the concept of Smart Defense has taken on special importance, especially for countries that are part of international alliances such as NATO. This article examines the origins of the Smart Defense concept, its main elements, and how this concept is being implemented in Albania within the framework of the alliance's defense strategies.

Origins of the Smart Defense Concept. The Smart Defense concept was first promoted by NATO in 2012, in response to the need for a more effective approach to collective defense. Following the global financial crisis of 2008, many NATO allies began to experience severe budgetary pressures that limited their defense investments. To address these challenges, Smart Defense aimed to maximize the efficiency of defense resources through cooperation among allies and the more effective use of new technologies (Kaplan, 2015). Instead of each country investing separately in expensive defense capabilities, the Smart Defense concept provided a platform for sharing responsibilities and resources through joint NATO projects, thereby increasing collective defense capacity.

In the Albanian context, Smart Defense is particularly relevant, as the country faces major challenges due to its limited military budget and the need to modernize its armed forces. Albania's membership in NATO has enabled the country to benefit from the advantages of this approach, contributing to collective projects and improving defense capabilities through cooperation with allied partners (Duka, 2012). Smart Defense has enabled Albania to play a greater role in regional and international security, without the need for large expenditures on expensive armaments. "Soft power and technological capabilities are two elements that must be combined in a smart way for a more effective and affordable defense." Nye, J. S. (2011).

Key Elements of Smart Defense. Smart Defense is based on three key elements: collective defense, coordination among allies, and efficient use of resources. All three of these elements are essential to ensure that NATO member states can address global security challenges in a coordinated and successful manner.

- **Collective Defense:** At the core of Smart Defense is the principle of collective defense, which means that an attack against one NATO member state is considered an attack against the entire alliance. This principle is essential

for the security of small countries like Albania, which do not have sufficient capabilities to defend themselves against major threats. Through Smart Defense, Albania can rely on its allies to guarantee national security, while contributing to collective defense operations (Fischer, 2009).

- Coordination among allies: One of the main challenges facing allied countries is the lack of coordination in military investments. Smart Defense seeks to address this problem by encouraging allied countries to coordinate their defense efforts and share resources. For example, instead of each country building up full military capabilities in different areas, allied countries could specialize in specific areas and rely on each other for the capabilities they lack (Kaplan, 2015). In this way, Albania can focus its resources on areas where it has advantages, while benefiting from the capabilities of other allied countries.
- Efficient use of resources: Smart Defense aims to maximize the use of limited resources through the optimization of technology and the sharing of responsibilities. Technology plays an important role in this regard, enabling countries to use more advanced equipment and systems to cope with modern threats. Albania, as a country with limited resources, has benefited from this approach by improving its technological capacities and using its resources more effectively through participation in joint NATO projects (Duka, 2012).

Smart Defense and Albania: Challenges and Prospects for the Future

For Albania, Smart Defense represents a great opportunity to improve its defense capabilities and contribute to regional and international security. As the country continues to integrate into Euro-Atlantic structures, Smart Defense provides a platform for close cooperation with allies and for sharing responsibilities in collective defense. However, for the successful implementation of Smart Defense in Albania, there are several challenges that need to be addressed. One of the main challenges for Albania is the limitation of financial and technological resources. While Smart Defense aims to optimize the use of resources through cooperation, Albania needs further investments to improve its technological capabilities, especially in the areas of cyber defense and surveillance technologies (Fischer, 2009). Increasing the defense budget and cooperating with international partners will be crucial for improving the country's defense capacity.

Another challenge is to increase the capacities of military personnel. To implement Smart Defense strategies, Albania needs to invest in training and upgrading its military personnel, especially in the field of technology and cyber defense. Through NATO training programs and bilateral cooperation with other

member states, Albania can increase its capacities in these areas and improve its readiness to face new threats. The prospects for the future are positive, however. Through the implementation of the Smart Defense approach, Albania has begun to integrate more closely into NATO's collective defense architecture and benefit from sharing resources and experiences with its allies. The country has great potential to play a greater role in regional security and to contribute to joint NATO operations, based on the principle of burden-sharing and mutual assistance. "Traditional military force has limitations in an interconnected world, and only through an intelligent and collaborative approach can sustainable security be achieved" Smith, R. (2007).

Smart Defense therefore represents a new and necessary approach for countries like Albania, which face resource constraints and new threats to national security. Through the principles of collective defense, coordination among allies, and more efficient use of resources, Albania has managed to increase its defense capabilities and contribute to regional security. Although the challenges are great, especially in terms of financing and technological capabilities, Albania has shown a strong commitment to fulfilling its obligations to NATO and improving national security. In the future, the further development of Smart Defense in Albania will require sustainable investments, close cooperation with international partners, and a commitment to meeting the challenges related to technology and personnel. Only through such an approach can Albania ensure that it is ready to face new threats and defend its sovereignty in an increasingly interconnected world.

Comparison between the traditional concept and Smart Defense in the conditions of Albania

National security has always been an essential aspect for any state, especially for small countries like Albania. Traditionally, the concept of defense was focused on preserving sovereignty and territorial integrity through armed forces. This concept, called traditional defense, was formed during the Cold War period, when threats to national security were mainly of a military and territorial nature. However, with global developments and changes in the nature of threats, the concept of Smart Defense was introduced, especially within the framework of NATO. This essay will examine the advantages and disadvantages of these two concepts in Albania, the evolution of national and international strategies, and examples of the implementation of Smart Defense in different countries.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Traditional and Smart Defense Concepts. Traditional defense is mainly focused on maintaining territorial integrity through military forces and internal mobilization of the state. The main advantage of this approach is the clarity and direct control that a state has over its defense.

Albania, especially during the communist period, relied on this approach, where every citizen was involved in the defense of the country through a strategy of popular resistance (Duka, 2012). This approach emphasized the importance of a decentralized defense, ensuring that internal forces can react to any military threat.

However, the main disadvantage of traditional defense is its dependence on domestic resources, which in certain cases, such as the case of Albania, may be limited. Albania has faced great difficulties in modernizing its military forces and in securing sufficient resources for an effective defense during the post-communist transition (Fischer, 2009). This model is also limited in facing new threats that are not only military, but also include cyberattacks, terrorism and asymmetric threats.

On the other hand, Smart Defense is an approach that promotes international cooperation and more efficient use of resources through collective projects. This concept was introduced by NATO in 2012 to improve the way allied countries manage their defense, especially in the context of budgetary pressures and new threats (Kaplan, 2015). The main advantage of Smart Defense is that it allows countries with limited resources, such as Albania, to benefit from the technologies and capabilities of its allies. Through this concept, Albania can contribute to collective defense projects without having to build all the capabilities itself. "NATO represents an example of Smart Defense, where member countries can share responsibilities to achieve a more coordinated and robust defense." Sloan, S. (2016). However, the main disadvantage of Smart Defense is the increased dependence on allies. While Smart Defense implies burden-sharing among member states, this approach may create a sense of insecurity for states that feel more exposed to regional or global threats. Albania, as a small country in the Balkans, may feel external pressures from powerful actors such as Russia or China, which have strategic interests in the region (Orford, 2016).

The Evolution of national and international strategies towards Intelligent Defense

Over time, security and defense strategies have undergone profound changes to address new global challenges. Traditional defense, focused on securing borders and protecting against military threats, has evolved to include a more holistic approach, which includes non-conventional threats. Threats such as terrorism, organized crime, and cyberattacks have driven the need for intelligent defense and a more collaborative approach to security.

In Albania, this evolution has been evident since the country's NATO membership. Membership has forced Albania to modernize and improve its defense capabilities to comply with alliance standards. Albania's National Defense

Strategy now focuses on strengthening collective defense, modernizing the armed forces, and strengthening cyber capabilities to address modern threats (Duka, 2012).

In the international context, Smart Defense has been an important tool to manage the limited resources of member countries and to ensure a more efficient and coordinated defense. NATO has encouraged its member countries to invest in technologies and joint projects that help improve the overall capabilities of the alliance without the need for large individual expenditures (Weiss, 2018). This shift in international strategies has enabled a more affordable and sophisticated approach to defense.

Practical Examples of Smart Defense Implementation in Different Countries. Smart Defense has shown success in several countries that have benefited from international cooperation and resource sharing. One of the most well-known examples is the NATO Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) program, where several allied countries share aerial surveillance aircraft. This program has allowed small countries like Albania to benefit from NATO air capabilities without having to invest in expensive aircraft of their own (Kaplan, 2015). This model is a clear example of the success of Smart Defense, as it helps to fill gaps in national defense through cooperation with allies.

Another successful example of Smart Defense is the use of new technologies to improve the cyber capabilities of member countries. Albania has begun to build stronger cyber defense capabilities, especially after the cyber attacks that hit its institutions in 2022. Through the assistance of NATO and its international partners, Albania has begun to strengthen its cyber infrastructure to face new threats (Fischer, 2009).

Smart Defense has also helped countries with limited resources to invest in joint maritime defense projects. For example, several allied countries have built a joint fleet for maritime defense in the Mediterranean, sharing their resources and improving the overall security of the region (Orford, 2016). These practices have shown that Smart Defense is a sustainable and effective solution to face common defense challenges, especially for countries with limited resources like Albania. This cooperation between NATO member countries allows defense capabilities to be maximized through the sharing of resources and technologies, creating a stronger and more responsive system to regional and global threats.

Albania has begun to benefit from the concept of Smart Defense through participation in joint NATO operations and missions and regional cooperation with Balkan countries. Participation in joint peacekeeping operations and airspace protection within NATO has significantly strengthened Albania's role in the regional security architecture (Weiss, 2018). This is a clear example of how Smart Defense has allowed Albania to increase its defense capabilities without requiring large domestic financial resources. In conclusion, Smart Defense

offers a modern and more efficient approach to security challenges for countries with limited resources like Albania. While traditional defense offered certain advantages in preserving sovereignty and direct control over defense forces, it has become insufficient to cope with the new threats of the modern era, such as cyberattacks and international terrorism. Smart Defense, on the other hand, promotes international cooperation and resource sharing, allowing Albania to increase its capabilities through integration with NATO allies.

Although it has some disadvantages, such as increased dependence on allies, Smart Defense offers a more sustainable solution to security challenges in the era of globalization. Through further investment in technology and involvement in joint projects, Albania has the potential to improve its defense and contribute to regional and international security. The evolution of defense strategies from a traditional approach to an intelligent model is an important step for Albania and other small countries, which seek to ensure their sovereignty and stability in an increasingly interconnected world.

Challenges and perspectives for the future in the conditions of Albania

In the context of Albania, the concept of Smart Defense represents an important step towards the modernization of national defense and the country's inclusion in international security systems, especially in the framework of NATO. However, there are several important challenges that need to be overcome to ensure the full and effective implementation of this approach. Difficulties include the lack of financial resources, advanced technology, and the lack of proper coordination between national and international actors. Despite these challenges, there are significant opportunities for further improvement and development of Smart Defense in Albania, especially through regional cooperation and the improvement of technological and human capacities. "The wars of the future will require a mix of traditional military power and technological capacity, and Smart Defense is the path to this mix." Thompson, L. (2013).

Another challenge is the lack of coordination between national institutions and international partners. To implement Smart Defense effectively, there needs to be close coordination between Albanian institutions and NATO allies. For example, while Albania has progressed in its involvement in joint NATO operations, there remains a need for better cooperation in intelligence sharing and integration of common technologies (Weiss, 2018). The lack of this coordination leads to fragmentation and difficulties in achieving effective results.

Opportunities for Further Improvement and Development

However, despite the challenges, Albania has some important opportunities to improve and further develop its capacities within the framework of Smart Defense. One of the greatest opportunities is regional cooperation. The Balkans is a region that faces common security challenges, such as organized crime, cyber threats and terrorism. Through joint efforts with other Balkan countries and regional partners, Albania can improve its defense and share resources with other countries in the region (Duka, 2012). The creation of a common platform for cyber defense and air surveillance could be an important step in this direction.

Another opportunity for development is the modernization of Albania's technological capacities. While technology plays a crucial role in the concept of Smart Defense, Albania needs to invest more in advanced technologies and its cyber infrastructure. In this regard, NATO and other international partners can play an important role in supporting Albania to strengthen technological capabilities and develop the infrastructure needed to confront modern threats (Fischer, 2009).

Thus, while Albania faces major challenges in implementing Smart Defense, including financial constraints and lack of coordination, there are great opportunities for further improvement and development of this approach. Through regional cooperation and improved technological capabilities, Albania can fully benefit from the advantages that Smart Defense offers and strengthen its national defense in an increasingly interconnected world challenged by modern threats.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In today's world, where threats to national and global security are increasingly complex and diverse, Albania is facing new challenges that require a new and more sophisticated approach to defense. In this context, the Smart Defense concept, promoted by NATO, offers an extraordinary opportunity to improve the defense capacities of countries with limited resources, such as Albania. However, to achieve these goals, it is necessary for Albania to solve several key challenges, including better coordination among international partners and securing the necessary financial and technological resources.

In this analysis, we have examined both the traditional concept of defense, which focuses on the protection of national borders through armed forces and the mobilization of internal resources, and the more advanced concept of Smart

Defense, which emphasizes international cooperation and the more efficient use of limited resources through sharing and coordination among NATO member states. Traditional defense has been essential for Albania in the past, especially during the communist period, when every citizen and part of the territory was part of the defense strategy. However, this approach is limited to confronting modern threats such as cyberattacks and international terrorism.

On the other hand, Smart Defense offers a more sustainable solution for Albania in the context of new global threats. By sharing responsibilities and resources, Albania can benefit from the technologies and capabilities of other NATO allies, improving its defense at a lower and more affordable cost. However, this approach also brings increased dependence on allies and requires deeper and more organized cooperation within the framework of defense strategies.

Recommendations for Defense Policies and International Cooperation

- Increase investment in advanced technologies: Technology is essential for Smart Defense, especially for countries like Albania that have limited financial resources. Investment in cyber defense systems, artificial intelligence, and sophisticated defense equipment can significantly improve the country's defense capabilities. The Albanian government should make technology a high priority in the defense budget, while also seeking financial and technical support from NATO and international partners.
- Improve international coordination: Cooperation with NATO allies is essential for the successful implementation of Smart Defense. Albania should intensify efforts to cooperate with other NATO member states in the areas of intelligence sharing, joint training, and peacekeeping operations. Closer coordination will help Albania improve its capabilities and benefit more from the experiences and resources of its international partners.
- Human capacity development: One of the most important aspects for the successful implementation of Smart Defense is the training and qualification of military personnel. Albania should invest more in the education and specialization of its armed forces in modern technologies and tactics. Training provided by NATO and international defense programs is essential for increasing the capacities of Albanian military personnel.
- Regional cooperation: Albania should strengthen cooperation with other Balkan countries to address common security threats. The Balkans face challenges such as organized crime, cyber threats, and illegal migration. By creating regional alliances and partnerships, Albania can help share resources and improve the common defense of the region. This would reduce the pressure on Albania's domestic resources and ensure a more coordinated defense against regional threats.

- Policies to increase the defense budget: To meet NATO standards and successfully implement Smart Defense, Albania needs to increase its defense budget. Even though the country faces economic constraints, a higher percentage of the state budget should be devoted to strengthening defense capabilities. Such a policy will help Albania strengthen its defense independence, while benefiting from international cooperation.

Conclusion

In a rapidly changing security environment, Albania must be ready to face current threats ranging from cyberattacks to regional geopolitical challenges. Smart Defense offers a more contemporary and affordable approach for small countries but requires a major commitment from Albania to increase investments in technology and strengthen cooperation with its international allies. With proper planning and political commitment, Albania can strengthen its defense and contribute to regional and international security.

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An analysis of the transposition of the acquis communautaire on the Single Market in the European Union —

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Abstract

The article focuses on a very limited, though highly significant, aspect in the analyses that can be made regarding the regulation, development, and performance of the European Union's Single Market. The article's analysis is primarily based on the findings and data from the European Union's reports on the annual performance of the Single Market. The article attempts to briefly highlight several indicators of the progress in the alignment of legislation concerning the Single Market, such as the transposition deficit of directives, the conformity deficit of directives, and delays in the alignment of directives.

Keywords: *European Union, Single Market, acquis communautaire, directive, regulation, scoreboard, directive deficit, directive conformity*

Introduction

“The Internal Market has been an extraordinary force for economic and social good, but much of its potential is being wasted: it’s like driving a Ferrari in second gear.”

Former Commissioner Mr. Frederik Bolkestein,
March 7, 2003 (EC, 2003)

The Single Market was initially conceived as a free trade area without tariff or non-tariff barriers between its members. However, to this day and likely in the future, it will develop into much more than that. Today, the European Union has successfully become the largest integrated single market area in the world, while remaining one of the most outward-oriented. However, the Single Market is much more than a legal framework or a market: it is a zone of freedom, progress, opportunity, growth, shared prosperity, sustainability, and a tool for geopolitical projection (EC, 2023).

In 2023, the 30th anniversary of the creation of the Single Market was celebrated, but it did not receive the attention it deserved since the European Union is not yet fully a “single market” (Pelkmans, 2024). Nevertheless, it should first be noted that, according to estimates, thanks to the removal of trade tariffs, the reduction of non-tariff barriers, and the opening of state economies, the Single Market has increased the EU’s GDP by an average of 8-9% in the long term (Veld, 2019). However, it is recognized that the possibilities and needs for greater unification are essential. Strengthening the Single Market is highly necessary, especially as this market faces many shortcomings and barriers (more than is commonly thought), various taboos, and persistent distortions.

For this reason, the need for implementing a medium-term program has long been raised, led by the European Council and actively carried out by the European Commission and the European Parliament, to boost the EU economy. Joint efforts are required to enforce existing rules, remove barriers, and explore areas for further integration of the Single Market.

Work in this direction is expected to bring direct and substantial benefits. The potential benefits are significant, with estimates suggesting that removing barriers at the member state level for the Single Market for goods and services alone could add €713 billion to the economy by the end of 2029 (EC, 2023). Perhaps even more if greater momentum is generated through the stimulation of startups and increased investment in research and development.

Citizens and businesses can fully benefit from the Single Market only when EU rules are correctly implemented. Ensuring the proper daily enforcement of Single Market rules is a collective responsibility of the Commission and Member States. In particular, the correct implementation of regulations depends on the work of national authorities to give them full effect. Accurate and timely transposition of EU law is critically important to ensure that Single Market legislation achieves its intended effects.

Methodology

The transposition of directives is the process by which EU directives, which set the objectives that member states must achieve, are incorporated into the national legislation of each member state. The so-called directive deficit arises when a country fails to do this within the prescribed deadline. The European Commission monitors the performance of member states in implementing Single Market rules, which is measured and reported regularly through the “Single Market Scoreboard” report.

The “Single Market Scoreboard” was first introduced by the European Commission in 1997, aiming to assess the performance of member states regarding the four freedoms that constitute the Single Market: the free movement of goods, capital, services, and labor/people. Since then, annual reports have been published, providing insights into the performance and integration of the EU’s Single Market. From 2014 to today, the countries evaluated include the 31 members of the European Union and the European Economic Area Agreement.

The report serves as a tool for monitoring and reporting on the functioning of the Single Market in the European Union, offering an overview of how well EU countries are implementing Single Market rules and highlighting areas where improvements are necessary. The report is divided into key sections evaluating the overall performance of the Single Market: enforcement tools, the business conditions framework, and competitiveness. The legal framework enforcement section, is divided into six indicators. This constitutes a summary of the methodology in recent years, as changes have been made since its inception. These changes have not been major, but in any case, the methodology has not maintained historical consistency.

The article focuses on a narrow yet significant aspect of analyzing the regulation, development, and performance of the Single Market of the European Union. The analysis is primarily based on the findings and data from the EU’s annual reports on the performance of the Single Market. The article aims to provide a summary of several indicators related to the progress of legal alignment with the Single Market, focusing on three key indicators: the transposition deficit of directives, the compliance deficit with directives, and delays in the alignment of directives.

Although the continuous monitoring of overall legal harmonization specifically for the Single Market is a major concern for member states, this progress also holds value for candidate countries such as Albania. Firstly, it provides a perspective on the commitments and obligations that Albania will need to address in the future. Additionally, and perhaps of even greater interest, the annual challenges faced by member states in aligning legislation serve as a guide for our country’s engagement in the process of aligning its legislation with the *acquis communautaire*.

Transposition progress

Based on the status outlined in the 1997 report, progress over nearly three decades has been substantial. However, issues remain evident and ongoing for all member states, and occasionally instances of regression in performance are noted. Below is a summary of the main findings on three indicators from the annual reports of the “Single Market Scoreboard” since its inception in 1997.

The summary table is constructed as an aggregation of information from the “Single Market Scoreboard” over the 27 years it has been published. The information summarized in this table by the author is based on these reports and, due to changes in the methodology of preparing the “Scoreboard,” some data limitations or adjustments are acknowledged.

To provide an analysis of the formal aspects of the transposition of EU legislation into member states’ national legislations, the information below focuses on three of the six indicators analyzed by the “Scoreboard,” as follows:

- Average transposition deficit across all countries;
- Average compliance deficit;
- Average delay in transposition.

TABLE 1. Summary of the Historical Reporting of the Single Market Scoreboard

Year of report publication	Total of the directives in force	Total of the regulations in force	Average transposition deficit across all EU countries	Average compliance deficit	The average delay in transposition
2023	1,001	6,492	- 0.7%	-1.2%	18.3 months
2022	997	5,669	- 1.6%	-1.3%	12.6 months
2021	1,027	5,409	- 1.0%	-1.3%	7.4 months
2020	1,011	5,009	- 0.6%	-1.4%	11.5 months
2019	1,014	4,527	- 0.7%	-1.2%	8.4 months
2018	1,038	4,100	- 0.9%	-0.8%	8.7 months

2017	1,019	3,619	- 1.5%	-0.6%	6.7 months
2016	1,099	3,175	- 0.7%	-0.7%	10.1 months
2015	1,115	2,953	- 0.7%	-0.7%	7.4 months
2014	1,221	2,521	- 0.7%	-0.7%	9.2 months
2013*	1,367	1,914	- 0.6%	-0.7%	8 months
2012	1,393	1,613	- 0.9%	-0.6%	9.6 months
2011	1,525	1,347	-1.2%	-0.8%	7.9 months
2010	1,486	999	-0.9%	-0.8%	7.1 months
2009	1,606	897	-0.7%	-1.8%	9.8 months
2008	1,687	820	-1.0%	No reference	9.5 months
2007**	1,628	679	-1.2%	No reference	7.9 months
2006	1,620	570	-1.9%	No reference	9.2 months
2005	1,604	514	-1.9%	No reference	11.5 months
2004***	1,596	No reference	-2.2%	No reference	12 months
2003	1,579	No reference	-2.3%	No reference	11 months
2002	1,475	324	-2.1%	No reference	9 months
2001	1,490	275	-2.0%	No reference	12 months
2000	1,459	No reference	-3.0%	No reference	10 months
1999	1,441	No reference	-3.6%	No reference	11 months
1998	1,365	No reference	-3.9%	No reference	10 months
1997	1,346	No reference	-6.3%	No reference	10 months

* In 2013, Croatia joined the European Union as a new member state.

** In 2007, two new countries joined the European Union: Bulgaria and Romania.

*** In 2004, ten new countries joined the European Union: Malta, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Hungary.

Acquis Communautaire for the Single Market

“*Acquis communautaire*” is a French term referring to the cumulative body (legal framework) or collection of laws of the European Union, encompassing objectives, core rules, policies, and, in particular, primary and secondary legislation, as well as judicial case law. This includes all treaties, regulations, and directives adopted by European institutions, as well as decisions made by the European Court of Justice. In other words, all these elements constitute and shape the legal order of the European Union.

The “*acquis*” is dynamic because it continuously evolves with the development of the Community, and it is fundamental because all Member States are required to adhere to the “*acquis communautaire*.” The goals outlined in the EU treaties are achieved through various forms of legal acts, some of which are binding while

others are not, and some apply across all EU countries while others apply only to specific ones. Among the entirety, and the most important, are:

- (1) **Regulations** – A “regulation” is a binding legislative act. It must be applied in its entirety across the entire EU. For example, when the EU regulation on ending roaming charges within the EU expired in 2022, the European Parliament and Council adopted a new regulation to improve the clarity of the previous regulation and ensure that a unified approach to roaming charges would be in place for another ten years.
- (2) **Directives** – A “directive” is a legislative act that sets out an objective that EU countries must achieve. However, it is up to each country to create its own laws on how to reach these objectives. An example is the EU directive on single-use plastics, which aims to reduce the environmental impact of certain single-use plastics by, for instance, reducing or even banning the use of single-use plastic items like plates, straws, and beverage cups.
- (3) **Decisions** – A “decision” is binding on those to whom it is addressed and applies directly, such as to a specific EU member state or a particular company. For example, the Council issued a decision allowing Croatia to adopt the euro on January 1, 2023. This decision pertained only to that country.
- (4) **Recommendations** – A “recommendation” is not binding and allows institutions to express their opinions and suggest a course of action without imposing any legal obligations on those to whom it is addressed. For example, when the Commission issued a recommendation for media service providers in EU countries to improve transparency of ownership and protect their editorial independence, it had no legal consequences.
- (5) **Opinions** – An “opinion” is a tool that allows institutions to make a non-binding statement, meaning it does not impose any legal obligations on those to whom it is addressed. It can be issued by key EU institutions (such as the Commission, the Council, or the Parliament), the Committee of the Regions, and the European Economic and Social Committee. During the legislative process, committees provide opinions from their specific regional or economic and social perspectives. For example, the European Economic and Social Committee issued an opinion on the Commission’s strategy for small and medium-sized enterprises under the Next Generation EU program.

Firstly, referring to the above table, it is observed that in terms of quantity, the number of directives has been decreasing over nearly three decades and has stabilized at a nearly static level in recent years. From 1,346 directives in

1997, there are now 1,001 directives for the Single Market. Quantitatively, this represents a reduction of about 25% compared to the number of directives three decades ago.

On the other hand, there is a continuous increase in the number of regulations, which has grown nearly 30-fold in comparison. From about 200-300 regulations in force at the beginning of the Single Market, there are now approximately 6,000 regulations. More specifically, by 2012, there was a noticeable “shift” in volume, with the number of regulations surpassing the number of directives and continuing to increase to this day.

To analyze the changes in the number of directives and regulations within the Single Market, several aspects can be considered. These aspects are naturally related to the nature of the acts in question and are crucial for the functioning of the regulatory process of the Single Market.

Directives are legal acts that require member states to achieve a specific result but allow them the freedom to determine how to reach that result. They often require national transposition to come into effect. In contrast, regulations are legal acts that are binding and directly applicable in all member states without the need for further transposition. They are frequently used to create a uniform framework and ensure immediate implementation at the EU level.

The increase in the number of regulations may indicate an effort to improve the implementation of EU legislation. By using regulations, the EU can ensure more uniform and prompt application of laws. If member states face difficulties in the timely transposition of directives, shifting to regulations can help reduce issues related to non-compliance and delays. Directives often require more time to be transposed into national laws, while regulations are immediately applicable, thus facilitating quicker achievement of policy objectives.

On the other hand, it is acknowledged that drafting regulations may require more coordination and effort at the EU level to ensure they are suitable for all member states. However, the regulatory volume materialized in regulations can help build a more integrated and cohesive Single Market at the EU level.

In summary, the change in the number of directives and regulations within the Single Market reflects efforts to improve implementation and ensure more uniform and prompt application of laws across the EU. Analyzing this change involves examining the efficiency and impact of this policy at the EU level and within the member states.

Transposition deficit

“Transposition Deficit” summarizes the gap between the number of Single Market directives adopted by the EU and the number of directives that

have been transposed by each Member State. At the outset of measuring the transposition deficit, there was a significant number of untransposed directives, and at that time, all member states were not performing well in meeting their obligations.

The 1997 report, which was the first Scoreboard report, highlighted that at least 359 Single Market directives had not been transposed by all member states. In other words, at least one country had not implemented any of these provisions. Four years after the creation of the Single Market, over 25% of the Single Market directives were not transposed into the legislation of the 15 member states at that time (Scoreboard, 1997). Overall, the percentage of non-transposition varied from a low of 3% in Denmark to 10% in Austria.

Even on a sectoral level, it was evident that the level of non-transposition was not uniform across all sectors. For example, the highest level of non-implementation was particularly high in the transport sector, where 60% of directives were not transposed across all member states. This was followed by public procurement at 55.6% and intellectual and industrial property at 50%.

However, within a few years, there was a noticeable improvement in the progress of directive transposition. By the 2004 report, the average non-transposition rate of directives had decreased to -2.2%, down from -6.9% reported in 1997. Moreover, the number of completely untransposed directives across all member states had halved, from 359 directives in 1997 to 134 in 2004, representing 9% of all directives (Scoreboard, 2004). This represented a much more positive picture within a short period compared to the initial state of the Single Market's functioning.

According to the objectives set by the European Council, initially defined in March 2001, the target for the transposition deficit was set at below -1.5%. This target was later revised to -1% in March 2007 (EC, 2007), and by 2010, three years after the European Council set this target, the average transposition deficit reached below -1%. In 2011, the target was set to less than -0.5%, which remains the target today (EC, 2011). Since 2011, this target has never been achieved, and the average transposition deficit for Single Market directives has not fallen to below -0.5%.

In recent years, according to the data presented above, the average transposition deficit for Single Market directives has consistently stayed below 1%. Over the past decade, the performance in reducing the deficit has been more positive compared to previous years.

Nevertheless, the current target of 0.5% remains unmet, not only as an average across all countries but also individually, as many countries do not perform up to this target (EUROSTAT, 2007). In 2023, only five member states achieved the agreed target (EUROSTAT, 2023). Throughout the last decade, the average transposition performance has mostly remained below a -1% deficit. This contrasts with the previous decade, during which the deficit consistently exceeded -1%.

The table and the data above illustrate the challenges faced by member states in dealing with the transposition process. Although these difficulties have diminished over the years, the challenge remains visible.

Transposition Deficit and Interconnections

It is interesting to highlight the comparison of progress before and after the accession of 10 additional countries to the European Union in 2004. The same reasoning can be extended to 2007, with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania. For understandable reasons, the expectation was that these countries would face difficulties in keeping pace with the alignment process of other member states, thereby adding a burden to the average transposition deficit of the Single Market directives. This reasoning is legitimate when considering countries with widely recognized difficulties in law enforcement, but it also falls within the stereotyping of the “Global South.” In fact, the latter proved to be more accurate regarding the transposition expectations of these countries. (Börzel, 2000) This reality gained major attention in the 2010 report by Mario Monti to the President of the European Commission, which called for a new strategy for the Single Market. (Monti, 2010)

Comparing the performance of member states up to that point with the 2004 Single Market scoreboard, we see that the champions in reducing the transposition deficit were almost all the new member states. These countries performed better over time in transposing Internal Market directives than the older EU member states, despite having to adopt the entire *acquis* within a short period. (Scoreboard, 2005)

Within this perspective and of particular interest for Albania, a key finding emerges regarding the transposition progress within the new member states of 2004 and 2007. Analyses indicate that the more a new member state was economically integrated with the Common Market, the stronger its political commitment was to align its policies with EU law even before accession. Additionally, the more developed its administrative capacities were, the better its performance in transposing EU law. The significant impact of pre-accession transposition history on post-accession transposition performance also reveals the dependent relationship between pre- and post-accession behavior. (Knill & Tosun, 2009)

Delays in transposition

One of the key topics analyzed in the annual “Single Market Scoreboard” report is the calculation of delays by member states in adopting directives beyond the specified deadline. Historically, the average delay in adopting Single Market directives beyond the deadline was lowest in 2011, with an average of 5.1 months,

and highest in 2023, with 18.3 months. Notably, in 2022 and 2023, for the first time in the history of these calculations, the average delay in adoption exceeded one year beyond the deadline across all member states.

For the year 2023, Slovenia had the best performance with a delay of 9.7 months, while Greece had the worst performance with a delay of 40.6 months. Additionally, in 2023, four countries surpassed the target set in 2002, which aimed to prevent the adoption of directives more than 24 months past the deadline (EU CO, 2002).

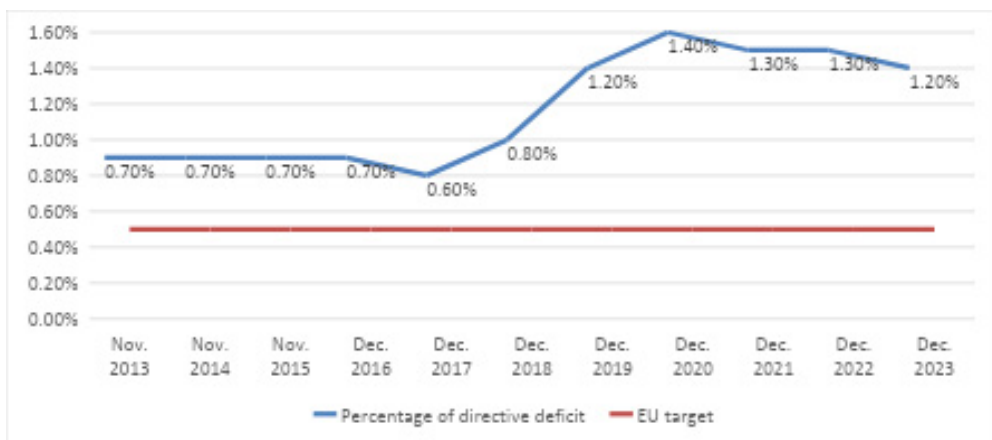
Countries that have consistently shown delays in adoption beyond the deadline include Italy, Spain, and Greece. Conversely, countries that have historically recorded low average delays in adoption beyond the deadline include the Netherlands, Sweden, and Luxembourg.

Conformity deficit

The compliance deficit or conformity deficit measures the number of transposed directives for which the Commission has initiated procedures for incorrect transposition. It is expressed as a percentage of the number of internal market directives reported to the Commission as “transposed” or “not requiring further implementation measures.” Only the Court of Justice can make a final determination on whether a directive has been correctly transposed.

According to the target set by the European Commission in 2011, the compliance deficit should not exceed -0.5% (CE, 2011). This target has never been achieved collectively by all EU member states. In fact, in the last four years, the average compliance deficit for all member states has exceeded -1%, with a continuous increase, reaching a record -1.4% during this period.

FIGURE 1. Summary of the Historical Conformity Deficit of Directives

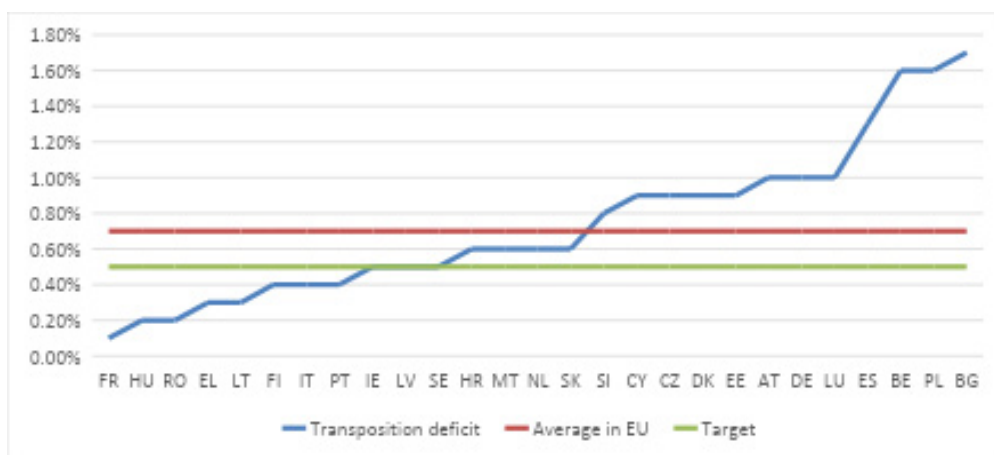


For the year 2023, it is found that 15 countries exceed the -1% threshold of the conformity deficit, with four of them surpassing the -1.5% threshold: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Denmark.

The current state of transposition

The annual report for 2023 considers all transposition notifications made up to December 5, 2023, for Single Market directives that had a transposition deadline of November 30, 2023, or earlier. As of that date, it is reported that there were **1,001 directives** and **6,492 regulations** in force to ensure the functioning of the Single Market (Scoreboard, 2023).

FIGURE 2. Status of Directives Transposition Deficit for 2023



In analyzing the 2023 data, it is evident that only four countries have exceeded the -1% deficit threshold: Spain, Belgium, Portugal, and Bulgaria. Meanwhile, four countries are at the -1% level, and eight countries are below the -0.5% deficit, including France, Hungary, Romania, and Greece. At the extremes of performance, France is positioned at the top with a deficit of -0.1%, having only one directive not transposed, while Bulgaria is at the bottom with a deficit of -1.7%, with 17 directives not transposed.

The Scoreboard, in a more detailed analysis, distinguishes between sectors in need of alignment, including competition, connectivity/media, digital society, consumers, energy (including consumption), environment, financial information, enterprise law, free movement of people, EU citizenship, social policies, taxation, transport, and others. For 2023, the sector with the highest number of non-transposed directives from member states is the transport sector, while the sector where almost all countries are in harmony with directives is the competition sector.

Additionally, specific countries should be considered to understand the process as a whole. One such example is Belgium, which, according to the 2023 report, recorded a transposition deficit of over -1%. This can be considered a significant achievement when compared to the problematic performance the country has experienced over the past 10 years. Notably, Belgium set a negative record in 2021 with a deficit of -2.1%.

Furthermore, if we examine the performance for 2024, which will be reported by the Scoreboard in 2025, we see a very positive achievement. With a deficit of -0.7% achieved in June of this year, Belgium has reached the most positive result in this decade. This not only places it below the -1% threshold set by the European Union but is also considered an achievement in the context of the EU Council Presidency (FMB, 2024).

The case of Belgium, the administrative hub of the European Union, highlights the nature of the legislative alignment process. While there are historical champions of alignment, such as the Netherlands, Denmark, and Finland, which consistently perform well in the “Single Market Scoreboard,” these countries usually show strong results in transposing EU directives into national legislation and maintaining high levels of compliance with EU regulations. Their high performance is usually attributed to their efficient administrative systems and strong commitment to EU integration.

Conclusions

Aside from the positive or negative conclusions that may arise from the analysis of the “Single Market Scoreboard” and monitoring reports as a whole, the reality extends beyond a quantitative and objective approach. Specifically, it is reported that the Commission continues to receive a significant number of complaints regarding the imperfect functioning of the Single Market.

The Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship, and SMEs (DG GROW) is the Commission’s department responsible for supporting an open, uninterrupted, and sustainable Single Market with open borders and the free flow of goods and services. Most recently, in 2022, DG GROW reported receiving nearly 200 complaints for assessment. These numbers indicate that the Internal Market is still far from being a reality for many citizens or businesses within the European Union. Many of these complaints pertain to specific cases of poor implementation and are therefore usually not subject to enforcement by the Commission (CE, 2023).

However, the number of these complaints highlights issues that deserve more attention to ensure that the so-called “second leg” of the EU enforcement framework operates effectively. There is a need for a more active role by national

authorities and courts in ensuring the accurate application and enforcement of EU rules. Often, individuals and businesses face insurmountable barriers and high costs when trying to assert their rights derived from EU law in national courts (CE, 2023).

Another valuable finding, particularly relevant for countries in negotiation processes and one of the most significant comments from the “Single Market Scoreboard” reports, concerns the report on administrative and political performance. Since the 2000 report, it is noted that *“Three years after the initial launch of the Scoreboard, it became clear that administrations can achieve a significant reduction in the ‘implementation deficit’ of the Internal Market legislation only if intensive administrative activity is accompanied by high-level political support.”* (Scoreboard, 2000) This political support from the governments of member states must also take into account the opposite effect, which is often observed in the alignment of legislation. The harmonization of national legislations should be wary of the risk of overregulation or “gold plating.” (Lausberg, Otero-Iglesias, 2024)

In relation to the primary objective of this study, the alignment process, analyzed as a mechanical process through quantitative data, also reveals the presence of challenges. Despite ongoing progress, where the regulatory burden has shifted from directives to regulations, the transposition of directives still faces difficulties. Furthermore, the EU has been engaged in the “standardization” of the Single Market, yet this process remains without a universally accepted “North Star.” Referring to the Monti Report, we find a meaningful comment in this context: *“The Common Market, the Single Market, the Internal Market: the changes in name over the years reflect the dual phenomena of deepening and enriching the great European market.”* (EC, 2010).

In this regard, various authors—diametrically opposed to the current trend—recommend, among other things, the immediate abandonment of the Commission’s approach to harmonized European standards. In other words, what is being called for is a reassessment that promotes a more “flexible” regulatory framework, one that supports market dynamics and improves conditions for EU startups, thereby enhancing dynamism within the Single Market (Pelkmans, 2024).

In the same spirit, Enrico Letta’s 2024 report recommends that “instead of seeking new primary legislation, the focus should be on improving the incorporation of these principles into secondary legislation at the European level and ensuring their effective transposition at the national, regional, and local levels.” (Letta, 2024) Some authors go even further, proposing that in areas where harmonization is difficult to achieve, the principle of “mutual recognition” should be reinstated. (Lausberg, Otero-Iglesias, 2024)

Naturally, this discussion extends beyond the narrow scope of this article and, moreover, requires an analysis that is difficult to exhaust within a single article.

The value of this discussion lies in its implications, which stem from the findings derived from the history of harmonization as reflected in the aggregation of information from the scoreboards.

If, until today, the legal framework of the Single Market has been primarily based on regulations, this has been done to facilitate harmonization—yet challenges related to the transposition capacity of member states persist. A departure from this approach, for the legitimate reasons highlighted above, raises questions about the “absorptive” capacity of member states when faced with an *acquis* structured around directives.

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The State and its Role for National Security

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Abstract

In this article, the duties, responsibilities and role of the state for national security will be addressed. The purpose of this treatment is to highlight the state as a separate political organization, as well as the main role and obligation it has for national security. The state is distinguished from other political organizations in a society because it is sovereign and exercises absolute and unlimited power. State institutions are public and responsible for making and implementing collective decisions, they exist to fulfill the interests of all members of society. The state includes in its jurisdiction all those who live within its borders. State authority is often based on force. The state exercises power in a certain coherent territory, of unlimited size, but with the condition that it is independent. It has an essential role in national security, the protection of sovereignty and the well-being of its citizens. The state drafts policy and also approves laws that regulate national security issues, which include criminality, corruption, various disasters, climate change, etc. He is responsible for the creation and support of the institutions of this security; for the protection of energy systems, water and sewage systems, roads, bridges, railway lines, protection of communication and information systems; for crisis management, which may include wars, social unrest, natural disasters and epidemics; for identifying threats and risks to national security; for preserving the rights and freedoms of citizens and raising public awareness of the potential risk of security threats and ways to protect

themselves; for inclusion in alliances and cooperation with important international organizations, such as the United Nations, NATO, the European Union etc.

Keywords: state, political organization, power, exercise of power, duty, responsibility, national security, management, crisis, emergency, disaster

I. Introduction

The existence of the state is very important for society. The order produced by it is essential, because its absence would lead society to chaos, while the opposite would take its breath away.

The main purpose of the state is to serve its citizens and, if the state does not fulfill its obligations towards the citizens, it loses its legitimacy and even endangers its existence. Every state has an obligation to protect the life and integrity of its citizens. The emergence of international human rights law brought great changes in international developments. The state is obliged to ensure equal rights for all its citizens and, if it discriminates against a particular group, practices terror or genocide, it cannot expect obedience from the latter. (Tomuschat, 1993)

The term “state”, (“*The full use of the term ‘state’ began in the 17th century, after the publication of Botero’s Region di Stato in 1589...*”) (Filo, 2000, p. 17) used to mark the legal status of various social groups, over time, in the contemporary era, took on the meaning of public order, to mark the new form of organization of power that was emerging within a territory certain.

The state is understood in three different ways: from an idealist perspective, from a functionalist perspective and from an organizational perspective.

The idealist perspective emphasizes the importance of ideas, values and ideals in the formation and functioning of the state. According to this approach, the state is a social construct based on ethical and moral principles. Idealists believe that the state should promote justice, freedom and welfare of citizens. In this context, the state is not just a mechanism for maintaining order, but a tool for realizing the highest aspirations of society.

The state is seen as an instrument for the realization of justice and individual freedom. The ideal state, according to idealists, is one that promotes universal values and is oriented towards a higher goal, such as the development of citizenship and the achievement of social welfare. This perspective is particularly important in discussions on the legitimacy of state authority and its role in achieving a just society.

Idealism is often associated with philosophical thought, with figures such as Plato and Hegel which have contributed to the formation of this perspective. Hegel in his essay writes: “The bed of the river on which great thought flows, is

idealism” (Hegel, 2005, p. 14). He emphasized the importance of institutions, such as the family, civil society and the state in the realization of freedom.

Hegel saw the state as an expression of freedom and ethics. According to him, individuals realize their freedom only through the community and institutions provided by the state. He understood history as a dialectical process, where every historical period contains within it tensions and contradictions that lead to development and progress. The state is a product of this process.

For Hegel, freedom is not simply the absence of obstacles, but an active process of involvement in social and political life. He saw the state as the guarantor of this kind of freedom. Hegel connected the concept of the state with ethics and spirituality. The state is an expression of the general will and a force that balances individual and collective interests.

Hegel believed that the state represents a high achievement of human civilization. He saw history as an evolutionary process, leading to the formation of advanced political and social institutions.

Hegel emphasized that individuals are related to each other and to the state in a reciprocal relationship. Individuals have duties towards the state, but the state also has responsibilities towards individuals, protecting them and providing opportunities for development. He argued that individual freedom must be integrated with collective freedom through the state. A good state is one that achieves this balance and provides an environment where individuals can develop.

Hegel emphasized that individuals realize their identity through the state. The state creates a context where individuals can find meaning and where they are recognized as part of a wider community. He appreciated that the identity of a state is closely related to its culture and history. For Hegel, the state was a living organism, where individuals are part of a larger structure. This means that individuals are responsible for their contribution to the well-being of the state, while the state is responsible for protecting the rights and freedom of individuals.

Hegel argued that the general will is a fundamental principle for the functioning of the state. The state must reflect the will of the citizens and ensure that general interests are in harmony with individual ones.

Hegel emphasized the importance of various institutions, such as courts and administration, which are necessary for the functioning of the state. He believed that these institutions are the places where individual and collective freedom can be harmonized. The state, according to him, is a means to realize a moral and ethical order in society.

The only shortcoming in Hegel’s interpretation is that “he shows an uncritical respect for the state and, identifying the state in ethical terms, Hegel fails to distinguish between institutions that are part of the state and those that are outside the state” (Heywood, 2002, p. 108).

The functionalist perspective focuses on the role and functions that the state performs in society. According to this perspective, the state exists to fulfill the needs of society, such as ensuring order, protection, managing resources and providing public services. Functionalists believe that each institution in society has a specific function that contributes to social stability and cohesion. The state, in this context, is seen as an entity that organizes and coordinates activities to ensure the well-being of citizens.

Functionalism, represented by thinkers such as Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons, sees the state as a system that must maintain social balance and stability. The state performs several key functions, such as: maintaining law and public order; guaranteeing national security through the armed forces; providing public services (education, health, infrastructure, etc.) and ensuring economic stability and development. This approach emphasizes that if one of these functions fails, it can lead to social and political disorder.

The weakness of the functionalist approach of the state is that it tends to connect every institution that maintains order (family, mass media, church and trade unions) with the state. For this reason, the organizational understanding of the state will be embraced, except in cases where a different or opposite position will be clearly stated.

The organizational perspective focuses on the structures and processes that make up the state as an organization. This approach examines how state institutions are organized, how they function and how they interact with each other. It emphasizes the importance of management, public administration and relations within institutions. The state, from this point of view, is an organizational complex that requires efficiency and effectiveness in fulfilling its tasks.

This perspective analyzes the structures and processes within state institutions. It focuses on the management and organization of institutions to achieve certain goals; in the relations between institutions, in the interaction of agencies and departments to ensure efficient governance; in organizational reform, in changes to the state structure to improve efficiency and accountability.

This approach is particularly important in the context of public administration and policy management, where increasing transparency and accountability is essential for building citizen trust. “The virtue of this approach is that it makes it easier to distinguish between the state and civil society” (*Ibid*, p. 108)

Each one of these perspectives has important impacts on the formation of public policies and governance strategies. Idealism can drive movements for social reform and ethical progress, functionalism can help develop policies that improve stability and security, while the organizational perspective can contribute to increasing efficiency and improving services to citizens.

II. The role of the state for national security

The state's role for national security is essential to the protection of sovereignty and the well-being of its citizens. The concept of national security was modernized in the 17th century during the Thirty Years' War in Europe and the Civil War in England (*Holmes, 2015, p. 17*) This concept includes a wide range of measures and actions aimed at protecting against internal and external threats, as well as maintaining political, economic and social stability. Protecting the nation and its people from attacks and other external threats through maintaining the armed forces and protecting state secrets is its top priority (*Ibid, p. 23*). The obligations and responsibilities of the state in this field are numerous.

Countries with developed democracies and consolidated national security strategy have an action plan on challenges, risks and priorities for the future (*Krasniqi, 2014*). This strategy requires a broad conception of what constitutes national security, the pursuit of policies and the building of flexible institutions that serve administrations of different time periods and a comprehensive range of national actions (*The White House, 2010, p. 51*). In its entirety, it includes criminality, corruption, various disasters, sensitivity (*"Climate sensitivity and estimates of its uncertainty are key inputs in the economic models that drive cost-benefit analyses and estimates of the social cost of carbon."*) (*Curry, 2014*) and climate changes, minimizing the possible impacts of these changes, protecting the rights and freedoms of citizens, balancing the need for security with the preservation of personal freedom. Through a strategic planning and decision-making process, this strategy aims to guide the country in fulfilling its national security priorities (*Republika e Shqipërisë, Strategjia e sigurisë kombëtare 2014*). The state draws up the national security policy, which aims to identify the threats and risks that may come to a country, especially those related to the protection of the population, the integrity of the territory and the stability of the state's institutions, also defining the countermeasures that should be taken by public authorities (*Politika e sigurisë kombëtare*) The state also adopts laws that regulate national security issues. These laws serve the protection of state secrets, cyber security, border protection and measures to prevent criminal and terrorist activities, etc.

The state is responsible for establishing and supporting national security institutions such as the army, police, intelligence services and other defense agencies, which ensure the maintenance of peace and order. These institutions are engaged to prevent and manage various threats that may arise from criminal groups, terrorist organizations, or threats from other states.

The protection of critical infrastructure, such as: improvement of energy systems, water supply and sewerage systems, roads, bridges, railway lines, efforts

to stop the destruction of ecosystems, protection of communication systems and natural resources are the responsibility of the state. These resources may be exposed to threats, such as cyber attacks, natural disasters, or sabotage.

Part of the role of the state is the development of a foreign policy that ensures the protection of national interests in the international arena. This aspect includes establishing security alliances with NATO and cooperation with other states to manage potential threats and promote regional and global stability.

The state has an important role in managing security crises, which can include wars, social unrest, natural disasters, and epidemics. This includes creating emergency plans, resources for rescue and renewal after a crisis, using new technologies for monitoring and predicting natural disasters, protecting the environment and natural resources, managing climate migration, creating safe zones, the training of security forces and emergency services, the creation of specialized units for emergencies, as well as the coordination of actions between various state institutions and international organizations, engagement in global initiatives, etc. In some cases, governments and their leaders are faced with events that require a new strategy, such as the case of the COVID-19 epidemic, for which the appropriate experience was also lacking (*Lembovska, Neçev, & Ruf, 2020, p. 13*)

The threats to a state and a nation are many. For this fact, the importance of the strategic concept of the hierarchy of threats has not been properly understood (*Murati, 2016*). Security as a concept, phenomenon and situation with social risk, which is currently defined and evaluated in the narrow sense, referring to criminality, (especially the violent one); needs to be expanded and standardized institutionally at the national level (*Yzehiraj, 2023*).

The current tense situation in Europe and beyond, especially after the Russian aggression in Ukraine and the violent annexation of Crimea, the Russian military intervention in the civil war in Syria, and the conflict in the Middle East has created a conceptual and political confusion about the nature, importance and the series of threats facing NATO, the EU and the West, but also the individual member countries of these organizations. Intelligence services are charged with gathering and analyzing information related to threats to national security. This information may include potential activities of terrorist groups, international espionage, or activities of organized criminal groups. Intelligence is vital to preventing threats and ensuring a rapid response in case of emergencies.

An important aspect of national security is the preservation of the rights and freedoms of citizens. The state has the duty to balance security measures with the preservation of the fundamental rights of individuals. This balancing is necessary to prevent abuses and to maintain citizens' trust in security institutions. The state also has a role in raising public awareness of the potential risk of security threats and ways to protect yourself. This may include educational campaigns, training and information on personal safety, information protection and emergency response.

In an increasingly globalized world, national security is closely linked to international security. Therefore, the state has an important role in cooperation with organizations such as the United Nations, NATO and the European Union (EU), to address threats that cross the borders of a state and that require a collective response.

The state has an important role in identifying and managing risks that may threaten national security. This process involves an in-depth analysis of potential threats and the development of strategies to prevent them. For example, preventing radicalization and violent extremism is an important aspect of security policies, which requires community involvement and the use of social intelligence to prevent terrorist acts. Likewise, risk management includes monitoring the possibility of violations of order and security by internal and external actors. For this purpose, the state uses mechanisms such as risk analytics, possible crisis scenarios and programs to increase preparedness in case of emergencies. This also includes planning to manage the consequences of potential crises, such as the economic, social and psychological consequences of a terrorist attack or natural disaster.

National security is not an issue that can be handled by a single state alone. International cooperation is necessary to address threats that cross national borders. The state should engage with international organizations such as NATO, the EU and the UN to create security networks and enable collective response to common threats.

Strategic alliances can include information sharing, joint operations, and the development of policies and agreements that address global threats such as international terrorism, organized crime, and cyberwarfare. States also assist each other in matters of cyber security and preventing attacks that could damage critical infrastructure. For example, many states have reached agreements on the sharing of intelligence information about terrorist groups and opportunities to prevent violent acts, which require international cooperation in the areas of law enforcement, border security and the fight against terrorist financing.

One of the greatest national security challenges in the modern era is the cyber threat. Digital technology and networks have radically changed the nature of threats to national security. Cyber-attacks can damage critical infrastructure, can damage the economy, breach citizens' personal data, and cause great social chaos.

The state has the responsibility to develop advanced cyber security strategies, which include protecting information systems, identifying potential attacks and developing measures to respond to them in real time. In this context, international cooperation to create a safe environment for using the Internet is also important. This also includes the help and support of the private sector, which has a large part of the critical infrastructure.

Intelligence services are important for identifying potential threats to national security. They collect information from various sources, including activities

of terrorist groups, foreign espionage activities, and suspicious movements of individuals or groups that may be linked to organized crime. Intelligence is essential for information management and threat prevention. For this reason, the state must invest in the training of intelligence officers and in the development of advanced data collection methods, as well as in maintaining secrecy and protecting against the possibility of exploiting sensitive information by foreign actors.

An important part of national security is the engagement of citizens in maintaining security. Active community participation in helping to identify suspicious activities, cooperation with authorities and support for security policies are important to ensure that citizens have an active role in protecting the state.

This may include awareness campaigns to educate citizens about potential threats, as well as teach them how to respond in emergency situations. In addition, the state can develop platforms for the notification and reporting of suspicious activities, which can contribute to the prevention of potential threats.

Another important aspect is the creation of a security culture where all agencies of the state, including those dealing with defence, intelligence, cyber security and civil defence, work together in a coordinated manner. This requires the development of clear protocols for cooperation, information sharing and response to threats that may be presented from different areas.

Conclusions

From the above description, we come to the conclusion that not every organism or political organization is called a state. The state stands above all institutions, organizations, associations or other social groups of a society. Its institutions are public and have the main goal of fulfilling the interests of citizens and ensuring the implementation of laws, often relying on force. State decisions are binding on all members of society. He exercises his activity within a certain territory, which is stable and controlled by him. In this territory there is a permanent population, whose number is not determined by international laws. The ruling power in this territory and over this population is the government, which can and must make decisions, issue orders and ensure their implementation even through physical coercion. The political power provided through the state is not an end in itself, but the means to implement a certain policy. The state in its real sense, as a political organization that exercises state obligation, has as its essential element power, which is exercised by law, which is inseparable from it. The state has the capacity to enter into relations with other states. A sovereign state is able to establish legal relations with other entities as it sees fit.

The role of the state in ensuring national security is multidimensional and requires constant coordination between domestic institutions and international

partners. This is an ongoing responsibility that includes protecting national interests, preventing threats and managing crises that may endanger the stability and prosperity of the state.

National security is one of the most important functions of the state and its role is always changing due to new technological developments, global challenges and new threats. To ensure the protection of the nation and its citizens, the state must develop and continuously update policies, strategies and mechanisms to manage threats and maintain peace, stability and order.

The role of the state for national insurance requires a continuous commitment to long-term planning, preparation of resources and assistance to the population. The state must play an active role and ensure that its policies and measures support survival and sustainable development in the face of these global challenges.

In a world facing increasingly rapid climate change and an ever-increasing frequency of natural disasters, the role of the state for national insurance is increasingly important. National security is no longer just a military issue, but has expanded to include environmental and climate challenges that require close coordination between public policies, security sectors and international cooperation.

To help address these challenges, the state must commit to improving its capacities for crisis management, invest in sustainable infrastructure, and support international cooperation and the creation of common policies to face climate threats. Only through a strong and coordinated commitment can a sustainable and secure future be ensured for generations to come.

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