

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Certainly, Enlargement policy has become as EU's most successful and strong policy. Yet, when it comes to Western Balkans the road to join European Union for country like Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia were not as smooth as the other Balkan countries (Slovenia and Croatia). Enlargement countries had to get through pre-accession and accession process which was not an easy task for Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia to get through.

This research analyzed European Union enlargement policy towards Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia by using the concept of Enlargement Policy and Copenhagen Criteria and concept of CFSP. Enlargement policy set out Copenhagen Criteria 1993 in which enlargement countries have to conform. The research sorted out the progress and obstacle of Albania, Montenegro, and North Macedonia in trying to fulfill EU criteria, from its Political, Legal and Economic criteria. The research found out that in their road to join European Union, Albania, Montenegro, and North Macedonia have faced same challenges to have full EU membership which caused by weak democratic institutions and widespread of corruption.

In Albania, the country has struggled in reforming their judicial system, in which 70% of Albanians did not believe of the justice system in protecting their rights (Hopkins, 2019). Many cases of bribery and corruption happened among high-level state officials. Moreover, the transition from communist-ruled to

democratic country hampered by the *nomenklatura* practice of communist regimes to favour a select group of few- the and the inappropriate influence that the executive had on the independent branches of government, which make corruption seen as an endemic in Albania. Furthermore, Albania continued to align its legislation to EU requirements in fewer of fields in order to enhance its ability to take on the obligations of membership, like in education and culture, and financial control field. In addition, Albanian's economic remains vulnerable as widespread of corruptions and malfunctioning judicial system has drastically hindered business environment as well as the effectiveness of fiscal and monetary policies.

In Montenegro, their political institutions were politicized. The legislative power in its oversight function toward government remains weak. Therefore, it became an obstacle for the country to fight against corruption. Moreover, there is no enforcement of effective law which let public officials and politicians feel they can act with impunity. Furthermore, Montenegro continued to align its legislation to EU requirements in fewer of areas in order to enhance its ability to take on the obligations of membership, like in company law, intellectual property law, energy, and foreign, security and defense policy.

In addition, economic and political reforms indeed required good public administration. However, in Montenegro public administration is very vulnerable with corruption. Businesses environment hampered by corruption in which in dealing with construction permits, paying taxes, and registering property, the country still ranks lower, therefore, corrupt practices is inevitable to reduce the burden or to speed up processes.

In North Macedonia, the executive power dominates parliament as legislative power and judiciary which made an absence of check and balances between government branches. Misused of power often happened, which judiciary seen as the most corrupt since the country still failed to implement the rule of law. Corruption again remains a serious problem in implementing administration reform. According to Transparency International's annual 2016 Global Corruption Barometer. Some citizens in North Macedonia have lack of faith in the ability of the public administration to function without the payment of some kind of kickback for facilitating bureaucratic procedures. It is known that nearly a third of the bribes paid (32%) are actually offered by citizens themselves, whereas in nearly 50% of cases they are paid by a public official in response to a direct or indirect request (UNODC, 2011).

Furthermore, North Macedonia continued to align its legislation to EU requirements in fewer of areas in order to enhance its ability to take on the obligations of membership, like in areas of company law, customs union, trans-European networks, and science and research. Yet, the country still has to improve its alignment with the EU declarations and Council decisions on Common Foreign and Security Policy. In addition, business environment in Macedonia is hampered by the lack capacity of institutions in enforcing the law in resolving commercial dispute through court which considered time-consuming and costly for the businesses.

In conclusion, Albania, Montenegro, and North Macedonia as former communist-ruled countries in taking transitional tasks on Copenhagen criteria from EU by adopting democratic values have hampered by high of corruption because of weak

functions of democratic institutions and judicial system, in which still have to be fixed or reformed in order to have EU full membership. Moreover, Albania, Montenegro, and North Macedonia also have to align its legislation with EU standards, especially with all EU common foreign and security policy positions and declarations.