

INTRODUCTION

The Research monograph is result of broad international cooperation among researchers and professors from thirteen Universities from the EU member states and from a number of other European states. Such broad international research cooperation gives by itself the monograph specific high value and rather interesting exclusivity. The major characteristic of the publication is the broad scientific approach used in the papers published. The research results are focusing on the number of specific evaluations of a wide range of impacts that are created by the process of the EU accession. Specific interest in research and in the published papers often is specifically related to the accession process and to the impacts that are typical for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The research monograph collects more than 20 research papers written by more than forty authors. The fact that most of the papers collected in the publication present a collective work of two or more authors creates additional quality of the publication. The publication proves that beside a broad international institutional cooperation as well the broad research cooperation was developed among a number of individual researchers who succeeded to formulate the joint research results for publishing.

The accession of the new states to the EU is based on fulfilling the specific EU enlargement criteria accepted by the Copenhagen European Council in 1993 and strengthened by the Madrid European Council in 1995. The accession process creates substantial changes in the economies and societies, including the business sector functioning and its competitive environment. A number of research papers published in the monograph are based on analyzing the impacts of the changes imposed on all mentioned levels through the process of the EU accession. Papers cover topics from more general impacts like adjustment of the banking sector, further some general assessment of the adequate analytical methods to be use for accession impacts evaluation, and further are related to the more specific topics like data protection and privacy rules implementation. Papers are often concerned by impacts and changes in the area of competitiveness, sometimes in connection with the catching up results and potentials of the accessing countries.

The accession process to the EU has two matching sides, which affect substantially each other. On one side is the accessing country with its all necessary changes and adjustments. On the other side is the EU with its accession criteria, and evaluating the candidate countries' progress. And further on that side is the EU with its functioning results more or less effective in the process of coping with its own functioning and performance problems. Often that part is related to the some approaches and reactions which are contained or are developed from the so called "EU enlargement fatigue". Especially some accessing countries in the region of the Western Balkan after many years

of the accession activities sometimes might feel that the actual interest of the EU for the enlargement is rather limited. On the both sides of the accession equitation more and more often people and researcher ask the questions about the actual benefits and disadvantages of the EU membership. Such questions are increasingly asked especially in the period of protruding sovereign debt crisis and in relation with broader financial and economic crisis that is seen in the EU and in the accessing countries. The well-known fact that the distributing of economic benefits created by the economic integration is highly uneven among the EU member states is getting more and more observed and challenged during the not so prosperous EU development in the last few years. In the accessing countries, with their long periods stretching over many years of preparations and adjustments, the evaluation of the levels of the expected membership benefits or disadvantages are getting more and more included into different reasoning and studies. The cases of some European states that are not EU members, but still have close economic relations with the EU, including the benefits of the open access to the EU internal market, might stimulate creation of some new ideas or concepts for the future end result of the present accession activities of the Western Balkan countries. Within such conceptual reasoning about the future relations the final EU membership might develop into not so highly appreciated option for some of the Western Balkan accessing countries. Partially dilemmas about the future reactions in the scope of the accession process final results are to some extend find in specific parts of some published research results.

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In the name of the authors and participating institutions we hope that the research results published in the book will be appreciated and in different aspects useful. The research results published might hopefully be accepted as a positive contribution in developing improved understanding of the accession process together with the strengthening of the relevancy of the future EU membership realization.

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