

Research Article

THE INTEGRAL ROLE OF THE ALBANIAN PARLIAMENT IN EU INTEGRATION THROUGH NATIONAL LAW APPROXIMATION (JANUARY 2018 – DECEMBER 2023)

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ABSTRACT

Background: Albania negotiations for the country's EU membership formally began on 19 July 2022. The process will consist, among others, of approximating national legislation with the EU acquis, which is divided into six thematic clusters. Albania must achieve the country's legislation full compliance with the EU acquis and its successful implementation. Negotiations and subsequent membership in the European Union (EU) will support the democratisation and strengthening of the rule of law in Albania. This research examines the role of the Albanian Parliament in the EU integration process through the approximation of national laws. This desk research serves as a cornerstone for further research and academic studies regarding the Albanian Parliament's involvement in EU integration efforts through the process of national law approximation. Therefore, to better approximate national legislation with that of the EU, it is recommended that Parliament increases the trend of approving laws aimed at approximation.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted to examine the legislative activity of the Albanian Parliament (Parliament hereinafter) between 2018 and 2023 in terms of approximation of national laws with the EU acquis. The study used a desk review to analyse the annual number of laws adopted and approximated to EU law. Reliable sources from the Official Journals of the Republic of Albania (Albania hereinafter) were used to collect data on laws adopted and approximated during the study period providing an understanding of the total number of laws adopted and approximated for each year, the relevant EU act, and the clusters of the negotiation chapters.

Results and Conclusions: *Analysing the role of Parliament in EU integration through the approximation of national legislation from 2018 to 2023 highlights the multidimensional nature of the integration process and the important contribution made so far by the legislative power. During the period covered by the study, Parliament has made important efforts to approximate national legislation with EU legislation, which is proven by the study results. Based on the study data, a quantifiable difference was found between the total number of laws approved and those approximated by Parliament from 2018 to 2023. The study's conclusions and recommendations provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities in approximating Albanian legislation with the EU acquis and advancing the country's European integration agenda.*

1 INTRODUCTION

Integration into the EU is Albania's primary political and strategic objective. The process of EU integration promotes the democratic system in Albania, the consolidation of its institutions, and the rule of law, as well as ongoing fundamental reforms towards full membership in the EU.¹ The EU evaluated certain priorities that enabled the opening of negotiations in July 2022, including the adoption and implementation of the reform strategy for the judiciary and respect for human rights.² The justice reform, a package of laws approved by Parliament in 2016, with a focus on improving access to justice and its efficiency, is considered the greatest achievement for Albania in the EU integration process. However, further progress should be achieved.

For Albania and other countries aiming for EU membership, adherence to the requirements outlined in Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) is necessary. This provision links formal criteria with political aspects, emphasising the importance of upholding the listed values. These values, as outlined in Article 2, hold legal significance as they indicate the necessity of maintaining a democratic government that upholds the rule of law and human rights, along with other important values.³

1 Decision of the Council of Ministers no 16, dated 11 January 2024 'On the approval of the National Plan for European Integration 2024–2026' [2024] Official Journals of the Republic of Albania 11/2074 <<http://qbz.gov.al/eli/vendim/2024/01/11/16>> accessed 30 April 2024.

2 'Albania' (European Council and Council of the European Union, 2024). <<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/albania/>> accessed 30 April 2024.

3 Marija Vlajković and Jelisaveta Tasev, 'The challenges of approximation of national law with the EU *acquis* in the Western Balkans in light of the new enlargement tendencies' in Mareike Fröhlich, Elizabeth Harvey and Ingrid Sigstad (eds), *South Eastern Europe and the European Union - Legal Transformations* (Alma Mater 2020) 85.

One of the main issues in admitting a new member state to the EU is the approximation⁴ of national legislation with the EU *acquis*, involving legal reforms to adopt new laws or amend existing ones. To become a member of the EU, a country must ensure that its legal system is approximated with all areas where the Member States have delegated their competencies to the EU.⁵ For Albania, this obligation began upon the entry into force of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) on 1 April 2009. The SAA places significant emphasis on approximating Albanian legislation with that of the EU, representing a core obligation.⁶

In accordance with Article 70 of Title VI of the SAA, Albania is obliged to align its legislation with that of the EU.⁷ Regarding the timeline of approximation, the study “Guidelines for Law Approximation” noted that at the time of accession, national laws, regulations, and administrative procedures necessary to implement current EU legislation would have to be adopted.⁸

Albania's Constitution is the primary source for the EU integration process regarding institutional commitments. According to Article 100, the Council of Ministers (hereinafter CoM) makes decisions to establish the primary directions of state policy. Parliament approves these policies through the laws it passes. The CoM, the executive branch of government, is primarily responsible for managing Albania's membership process to the EU. It has the authority to negotiate with the EU and plays a leading role, but it is not the sole

4 Throughout the article is used the term “approximation” in accordance with the definitions provided in the Treaty of Lisbon and the Stabilization Association Agreement, see: Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community (Lisbon, 13 December 2007) [2007] OJ C 306/1 <<http://data.europa.eu/eli/treaty/lis/sign>> accessed 30 April 2024; Stabilization and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Albania, of the other part: Protocols, Declarations [2009] OJ L 107/166 <http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/2009/332/oj> accessed 30 April 2024.

The EU Treaties use the terms harmonisation, approximation, and coordination to describe the process of legal approximation, indicating the different degrees of integration between the EU and its Member States. The Treaty of Lisbon uses the first two terms to indicate the alignment of national legislation with that of the EU. In a broader sense, “coordination” is used to refer to the policies as a whole. Regarding countries that are not yet members of the EU, the term used is “approximation”. The Stabilization Association Agreement refers to this as an “approximation of legislation” (Article 70). In more specific provisions such as those on transport (Article 59, paragraph 1) or consumer protection (Article 76), the term “harmonisation” is used.

5 Qeveria e Republikës së Kosovës, ‘Përafrimin e legjislacionit të Republikës së Kosovës me legjislacionin e Bashkimit Evropian’ (*Zyra e Kryeministrit*, 28 Prill 2014) 69 <<https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/blog/udhezime-praktike-per-perafrimin-e-legjislacionit-te-republikes-se-kosoves-me-legjislacionin-e-bashkimit-evropian-28-04-2014/>> accessed 3 April 2024.

6 Erjola Xhuvani and Naim Mecalla, ‘Case Study on Integration Process of Albania Towards EU: Harmonisation of Domestic Legislation with that of EU’ (2023) 6(4) Access to Justice in Eastern Europe 254, doi:10.33327/AJEE-18-6.4-n000404.

7 Stabilisation and Association Agreement (n 4) art 70.

8 Adam Lazowski and others, *Guidelines for Law Approximation* (SMEI III 2016) <<https://online.pubhtml5.com/qzcc/wboq/>> accessed 3 April 2024.

actor. Under the constitutional principle of checks and balances,⁹ Parliament exercises legal and political control over the European integration process. As the legislative branch, it oversees the executive branch and holds it accountable for the process. This ensures the highest degree of democratic legitimacy of the process.

Parliament's involvement in the integration process is defined in the constitutional and legal framework¹⁰ as follows: 1. to approximate national laws with EU legislation; 2. to supervise the executive branch; 3. to cooperate with other legislative bodies. This study examines Parliament's role in European integration, with particular emphasis on its legislative function. Parliament is empowered to approve any legal act aimed at approximation, which must be enacted as a law. Based on this, the principal question addressed in this study is how the approximation of Albanian legislation with the EU *acquis*, as evidenced by the laws approved by Parliament, affects its role in the European integration process.

To achieve the aim of this study, three key objectives have been identified as follows.

The study's first objective is to examine trends in the annual number of laws adopted and approximated to EU legislation between 2018 and 2023¹¹. The analysis focuses on research questions such as:

- How has Albania's Parliament's rate of approximating national laws with the EU *acquis* evolved between 2018 and 2023?
- Have there been any significant fluctuations in the yearly number of estimated laws, and what factors may have contributed?

The second objective is to investigate the fields and clusters of negotiating chapters for the approximation of national laws, to determine the following research questions:

- What are the most approximated fields between 2018 and 2023?
- What are the clusters of negotiating chapters with the highest number of approximated laws between 2018 and 2023?

9 Constitution of the Republic of Albania no 8417, dated 21 October 1998 (last amended 10 February 2022) <<http://qbz.gov.al/eli/ligj/1998/10/21/8417>> accessed 31 March 2024.

10 Law no 15/2015, dated 3 March 2015 'For the Role of the Assembly in the Process of Integration of the Republic of Albania into the European Union' (amended by law no 19/2023, dated 16 March 2023) <<http://qbz.gov.al/eli/ligj/2015/03/05/15>> accessed 4 April 2024.

11 The period selected for this study is 2018 to 2023 because the data for the period 2009 to 2018 (as of 14 June) are provided in the dissertation thesis titled "Parliamentary Sovereignty and the EU - in the view of the jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the EU" for the Ph.D. scientific degree by the author Pranvera Beqiraj, see: Pranvera Beqiraj, 'Bashkimi Evropian dhe Sovraniteti Parlamentar: Një këndvështrimin e vendimeve të Gjykatës së Drejtësisë të Bashkimit Evropian' (doktor disertacion, Universiteti i Tiranës 2018) 156 <<https://unitir.edu.al/bashkimi-evropian-dhe-sovraniteti-parlamentar-ne-kendveshtrimin-e-vendimeve-te-gjykates-se-drejtetise-te-bashkimit-evropian/>> accessed 3 April 2024.

As a third objective, the study will examine data on the number of national laws approximated with the relevant EU acts and the degree of approximation. Thus, it will be determined which categories of EU acts (EU primary law, regulation, directive, decision, and recommendation) have been the focus of Parliament's approximation efforts. Also, it will be established whether the approximated laws are partially or completely approximated to the relevant EU act.

Analysing the Albanian Parliament's legislative initiatives and reforms from 2018 to 2023 can help policymakers and researchers understand the dynamics of EU integration and the role of national institutions. Thus, the research allows policymakers to evaluate Albania's progress toward EU integration, identify areas of success and challenges, and revise strategies to address gaps. It also adds valuable knowledge to comparative European legislative studies, providing insights into the complexities of legislative adaptation to EU norms and contributing to theoretical debates on legal system convergence. Disseminating findings and recommendations can enhance interested parties' comprehension of EU requirements and encourage their involvement in the integration process.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The process of European integration necessitates approximating national legislation with EU law. As countries pursue EU membership, their national parliaments assume a pivotal role in the adoption of legislation that aligns with EU requirements and standards. This section reviews the literature on the institutional, political, and legal aspects of the accession process for law approximation in the context of candidate countries' aspirations to join the EU.

An analysis of the relevant literature revealed that the definition of the process of national legal approximation with that of the EU is given to unify its meaning. In 2021, the Ministry of Justice of Albania published the "Manual for the Drafting of Legislation", which included significant updates to the process of national legal approximation with that of the EU. The process of approximation is defined as the procedure through which a state's laws, rules, and internal procedures are adapted to align with the entire body of the EU *acquis*, within the context of fulfilling the obligations that arise for states that aspire to join it.¹²

Furthermore, the authors of the doctrine concur that this process encompasses two interrelated aspects. The study "The Historical and Theoretical Aspect of Approximation of Law in Central Europe" states that the process of legal approximation can be divided into two components. The first is the convergence of candidate countries' legal systems with EU

12 Tedi Dobi (red), *Manual per Hartimin e Legjislacionit: Metodologjia e unifikuar shqiptare për procesin ligjvënës, hartimin e akteve normative dhe terminologjinë juridike sipas neneve 5(1) dhe 6(5) të ligjit nr 8678, datë 14.5.2001 "Për organizimin dhe funksionimin e Ministrisë së Drejtësisë"* (botimi i 3-të, Ministrisë së Drejtësisë 2021) 21 <<https://www.drejtesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Manual-Shqip-E-bashkuar.pdf>> accessed 2 May 2024.

law. This can be defined as the procedure that guarantees these legal systems' degree of consistency. The second component is that of legal unification.¹³

The national parliament's role in the European integration process is mentioned explicitly in the other part of the literature review. Based on the desk research that we have conducted, the literature on the role of national parliaments of candidate countries during the European integration process is largely concerned with the political role of the parliament and its relationship with the executive power. Regarding the legislative function of the national parliament in approving laws for approximation, the studies are focused on the procedural aspect of the legislative process for approving these laws. The procedural aspect pertains to the adaptation of the stages of the national legislative process for the adoption of laws aimed at the approximation or establishment of the relevant parliamentary setup for European integration.

Academic contributions such as "Lost in Implementation: EU Law and Application in the Albanian Legal System" recognise the role of the Albanian Parliament in the approximation process and its responsibility to adopt laws that comply with EU requirements and standards. Parliament plays a pivotal role in the process of legislative approximation, as it is responsible for transposing EU directives and regulations into national laws. This is evident through an analysis of the legal framework of the role of Parliament in European integration and the Commission for European Affairs, a permanent organ of Parliament since 2004,¹⁴ and directly involved in the legislative process of approving laws that aimed at approximation.¹⁵

Also, the study "The Role of the National Parliament in the European Integration Process"¹⁶ underlines the role of the structures set up at the parliamentary level in supporting Parliament in its role in the European integration process and the importance of these structures in facilitating parliament's engagement with EU integration.

The increasing role of parliaments in candidate states in promoting the rule of law is highlighted in the academic research, "The EU and Rule of Law Promotion in Western Balkans – a New Role for Candidate States' Parliaments". It also examines how Western Balkan parliaments utilise legislative oversight, government action

13 Vlasta Kunova, 'The Historical and Theoretical Aspect of Approximation of Law in Central Europe' in Naděžda Šišková (ed), *From Eastern Partnership to the Association: A Legal and Political Analysis* (Cambridge Scholars Pub 2014) 244.

14 The Commission of European Affairs was set up with Decision No. 117, The Parliament of the Republic of Albania (2004).

15 Bojana Hajdini and Gentjan Skara, 'Lost in Implementation: EU Law Application in Albanian Legal System' (2017) 19(33) *Journal of Legal Studies* 49-50, doi:10.1515/jles-2017-0003.

16 Entela Nikaj, 'Roli i parlamentit kombëtar në procesin e integritimit Evropian' (2016) 6 *Revista KUVENDI* 67.

monitoring, and lawmaking to promote the values of the rule of law and guarantee adherence to the EU *acquis*.¹⁷

The other aspect of Parliament's role in European integration studied in the Albanian literature relates to inter-parliamentary cooperation with the EU. The EU's inter-parliamentary cooperation with the enlargement countries has moved closer to becoming the basis for experience-building and gradual preparation for EU membership. The Union describes its cooperation with the national parliaments of the enlargement countries as "a framework in which controversial issues can be raised" with "an element of transparency" and "proof of how deeply parliamentary democracy and pluralism have taken root". Recognising the limited role of national parliaments in previous waves of EU enlargement, the European Commission has also recently adopted a new approach that offers new opportunities for candidate countries' parliaments to fulfil their potential by "increasing 'ownership' of the reform process and informing the European Commission of non-compliance with EU rules".¹⁸

Most materials used to identify the clusters of negotiating chapters are technical documents. Some of these are reports from the European Commission on the fulfilment of obligations by states seeking EU membership and screening reports from the EU published at the end of the screening process for the related cluster of approximation. In addition, national acts, as the National Plan for European Integration (NPEI hereinafter), are approved by the states themselves. The NPEI defines, in addition to other important issues, a legislative agenda for the approximation of the Albanian legislation.

The NPEI is a document approved by the CoM, which must then be sent to Parliament. The obligation to send the NPEI has a purely informative character for the legislative body, as part of the government's obligation to inform it about the European integration process. This means that the NPEI does not require parliamentary approval. The actual NPEI was adopted by decision of CoM No. 16, dated 11 January 2024 "On the Approval of the National Plan for European Integration 2024-2026". The NPEI for 2024 to 2026 includes legislative and policy measures, institutional and administrative measures, and implementation measures, which extend until 2026, aiming for the gradual approximation of Albanian legislation with the EU *acquis*, as well as the strengthening of institutional capacities and their implementation. The NPEI 2024 - 2026 of Albania foresees a total of 236 detailed legislative measures, as shown in the attached table. For 2024, 102 legislative measures are

17 Alexander Strelkov, 'The EU and Rule of Law Promotion in Western Balkans – A New Role for Candidate States' Parliaments' (2016) 32(4) East European Politics 505, doi:10.1080/21599165.2016.1228529.

18 Gentiola Madhi, 'Dialogue wanted: The Experience of EU–Albania Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation' (EU Policy Hub – Communicating Europe, 28 April 2017) <https://www.eupolicyhub.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Dialogue_wanted_The_experience_of_EU_Alb.pdf> accessed 30 April 2024.

foreseen and categorised as follows: 29 draft laws, 35 draft decisions of the CoM, and 38 draft ordinances or other by-laws.¹⁹

Based on the above literature review and legal framework, it is evident that Parliament's role in the process of approximation of legislation during European integration is seen through a qualitative approach. There is a lack of quantitative studies referring to the concrete laws that Parliament has adopted to identify the number of approximated laws, the degree and the relevant act of the EU that has been approximated, as well as the cluster related to the approximated negotiation chapter. Through this analysis, the study "The Integral Role of the Albanian Parliament in EU Integration through National Law Approximation (January 2018 – December 2023)" represents a contribution and a deeper understanding inherent to the European integration process to fill the existing gap in Albanian literature.

3 METHODOLOGY

A retrospective cross-sectional study was conducted to investigate the legislative activity of Parliament regarding the approximation of national laws with the EU *acquis* between 2018 and 2023. The research was conducted through a desk review to investigate trends in the annual number of laws adopted and those approximated to EU law. The legislative activity of Parliament was assessed using the following steps, which allowed us to achieve the study's objectives.

Data collection consisted of collecting data on adopted and approximated laws for each year between 2018 and 2023. Reliable sources from the Official Journals of the Republic of Albania have been used. These journals publish all the laws passed by Parliament. This information can be accessed online at the official website (<https://qbz.gov.al>). Researchers analysed all official journals containing laws passed in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 twice. A two-week interval was allowed between the two separate reviews of the material to minimise bias and confusion. A final meeting with members of the research group took place to reach a consensus on our data.

In total, 1206 Official Journals were analysed.²⁰ The collected data were organised into different topics during the study period following the study objectives. For each approximated law, the areas and the relevant clusters of the negotiating chapter were identified. This was determined based on the scope and objective of each approximated law. It also identified the relevant EU act and whether there was a full or partial approximation. The priority of approximation in the agenda of the Albanian legislative institution for the period 2018 to 2023 has been quantified by determining the total number of laws adopted by Parliament, in addition to the number of approximated laws.

¹⁹ Decision of the Council of Ministers no 16 (n 1) 1.

²⁰ 'Arkivi i Fletores Zyrtare të Republikës së Shqipërisë' (*Qendra e Botimeve Zyrtare*, 2018-2023) <<https://qbz.gov.al/eli/fz>> accessed 2 April 2024.

To improve statistical analysis, the fields of approximation were narrowed down by grouping them into six clusters.

The data has been presented in tables and graphics for a better visual understanding, with the following topics: the total numbers of laws adopted and approximated for each year and for the total period of 2018 and 2023, the EU act with which the law was approximated, determining whether the law was approximated in full or partially with the relevant EU act, and the identification of the cluster of the negotiating chapter and the fields for each cluster.

To determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the number of laws approximated during the study period and the total number of laws approved, a two-tailed paired t-test was performed. A one-way ANOVA test was conducted to identify if there was a priority cluster of approximation for 2018 to 2023 in Parliament's agenda. ANOVA, or analysis of variance, is a statistical method used to compare the means of multiple samples. It is an extension of the t-test for two independent samples to include more than two groups. The clusters of negotiating chapters are divided into six. By analysing the variances, the objective is to determine whether there are any meaningful differences between the class means.²¹

In statistical significance testing, the p-value is the probability of obtaining a test statistic result at least as extreme as the one that was observed, assuming that the null hypothesis is true. When the p-value is less than 0.05, it is generally considered statistically significant, and the null hypothesis should be rejected. A p-value greater than 0.05 indicates that the null hypothesis is not rejected because the deviation from it is not statistically significant. Our null hypothesis is that there is no statistical difference in the means of groups, and the alternative hypothesis is that there is a statistical significant difference between the means of the groups.²²

4 DATA ANALYSIS

The study identifies the trends in the annual number of approved laws and those approximated to EU law by Parliament. To achieve this, Parliament's legislative activity in approximating national laws with the EU *acquis* was evaluated from 2018 to 2023. According to the data analysis, it was found that during this period, a total of 702 laws were approved by Parliament. Only 64 of these have been approximated with the EU *acquis*. Thus, between 2018 and 2023, there is a significant discrepancy between the number of laws approved by Parliament and those approximated to EU law (Figure 1).

21 Eva Ostertagová and Oskar Ostertag, 'Methodology and Application of One Way ANOVA' (2013) 1(7) American Journal of Mechanical Engineering 256, doi:10.12691/ajme-1-7-21.

22 Tukur Dahiru, 'P-Value, a True Test of Statistical Significance? A Cautionary Note' (2008) 6(1) Annals of Ibadan Postgraduate Medicine 21, doi:10.4314/aipm.v6i1.64038.

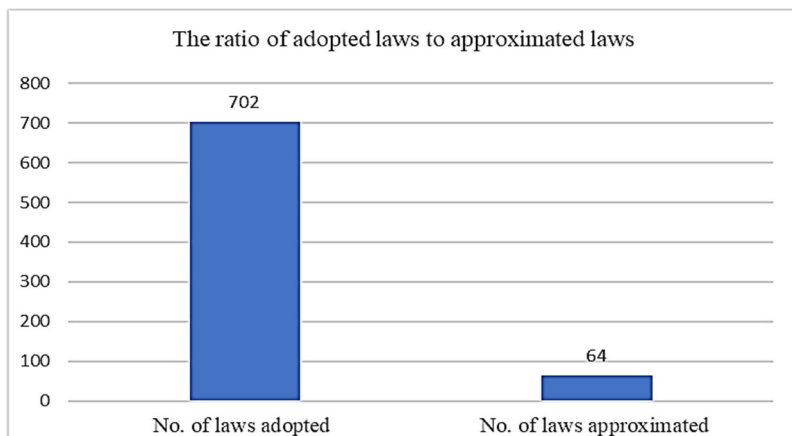


Figure 1. The ratio of adopted laws to approximated laws

To ensure data for each year from 2018 to 2023, the total number of approved laws was divided into approximated and non-approximated. The resulting data is presented in Figure 2.

First, Figure 2 shows that the year with the highest number of approximated laws is 2021 (18), followed by 2020 (16), 2023 (13), 2019 (7), and 2018 (6). 2022 is ranked last with only four approximated laws. Upon analysis of the approved laws, it is evident that the number of laws approved in 2018 is almost equal to the number approved in 2023. However, the number of approximated laws in 2023 is more than twice that in 2018.

Secondly, to obtain statistically significant results regarding the approximated laws from 2018 to 2023, we considered the ratio of approximated laws to those non-approximated, as presented in Figure 2.

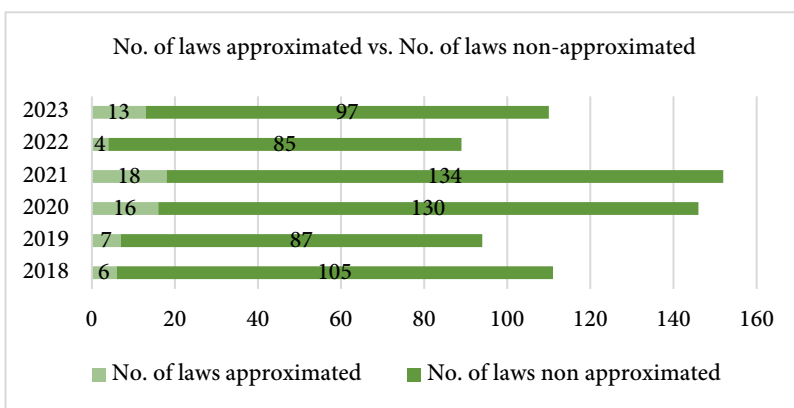


Figure 2. No. of laws approximated vs. No. of laws non-approximated

For this purpose, a two-tailed paired t-test was conducted to compare the total number of approximated and non-approximated laws for each year from 2018 to 2023. The paired samples *t-test* is a parametric test used to compare the means of the number of laws approved for each of our two groups of laws: approximated and non-approximated. It is used in hypothesis testing to determine whether two groups have differences from one another. These “paired” measurements represent two different aspects of the laws approved by Parliament for each year of the study period. The test aims to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in the means between these paired observations.

The result of the tests showed a statistically significant difference of 3.09515E-05 ($p < 0.05$). During the study period, there was a general tendency towards a small number of approximated laws compared to those approved by Parliament. The mean for approximated laws is only 10% of non-approximated laws. This result confirms the low tendency of Parliament to engage in legislative activity regarding the approximation of laws with EU *acquis* for each year from 2018 to 2023. (Table 1)

Table 1. Two-tailed paired t-test for approximated and non-approximated laws

	<i>No. of laws approximated</i>	<i>No. of laws non-approximated</i>
Mean	10.66666667	106.3333333
Variance	33.46666667	448.6666667
Observations	6	6
Pearson Correlation	0.859602552	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	5	
t Stat	-14.22256778	
P(T<=t) one-tail	1.54757E-05	
t Critical one-tail	2.015048373	
P(T<=t) two-tail	3.09515E-05	
t Critical two-tail	2.570581836	

The data collected was also analysed to which act of EU law (EU primary law, regulation, directive, decision, or recommendation) the national laws are more approximated. The results in Figure 4 show that the laws are mostly approximated with EU directives (85 directives). This is followed by regulations (39), decisions (4), and recommendations (2).

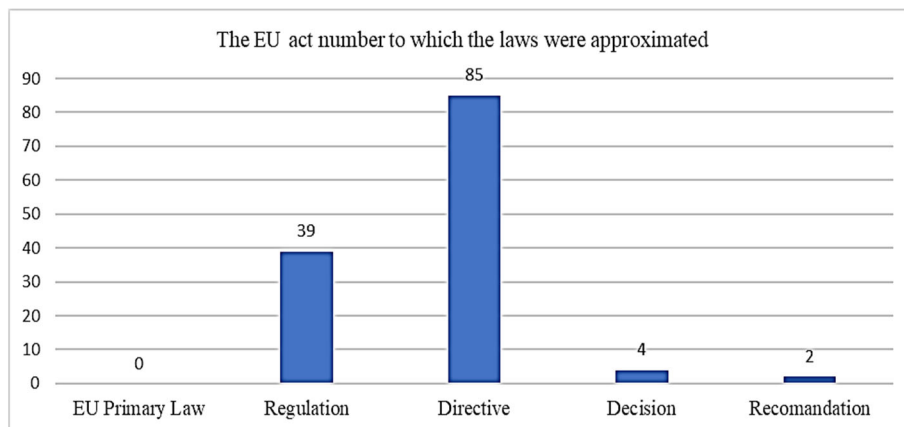


Figure 3. The EU act to which laws were approximated

The research conducted between 2018 and 2023 collected data on the degree of approximation with the relevant act of EU law of the 64 approximated laws. Of these, 63 laws were only partially approximated, while only one was fully approximated (Figure 4).

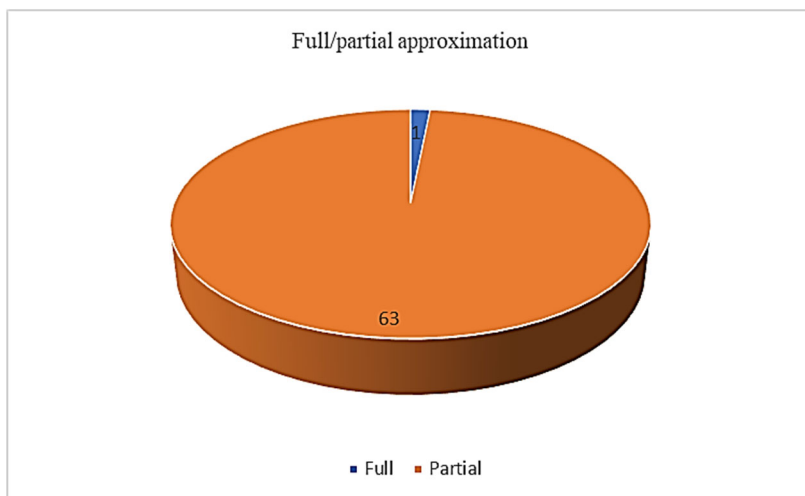


Figure 4. Full/Partial approximation

The field of approximation, which refers to the corresponding chapter of each cluster of negotiating chapters, is also important for the legislative activity of Parliament in its role on approximation issues. In February 2020, a revised methodology for the accession negotiations was introduced. As a result, the negotiating chapters are now divided into six thematic clusters: Fundamentals, Internal Market, Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth, Green Agenda, and Sustainable Connectivity, Resources, Agriculture and Cohesion, and

External Relations.²³ Identifying the field of approximation according to each chapter enabled the determination of the cluster of negotiating chapters.

A total of 24 fields from the approximated laws were identified. From 2018 to 2023, the fields with the highest number of approximated laws are consumer and health protection, taxation, and environment and climate change, each with seven laws. Additionally, justice, freedom, security, and transport policy have six approximated laws. The figure below shows the trend of approximation for other fields (Figure 5).

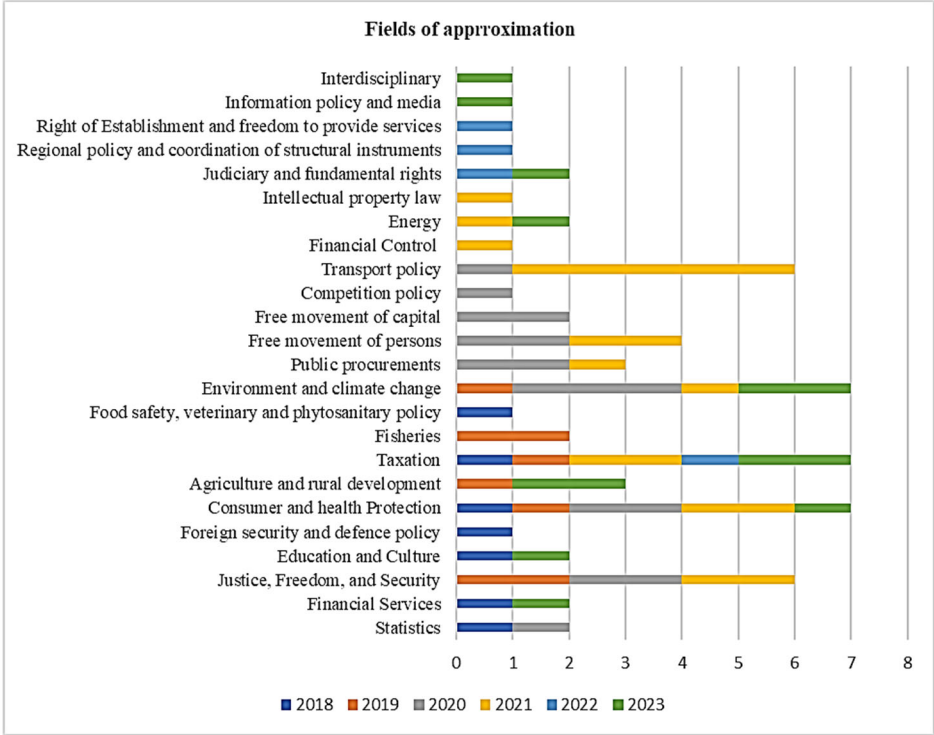


Figure 5. Fields of approximation

Based on the new methodology, each field of approximation is part of a certain cluster. For the study, the corresponding cluster of negotiating chapters has also been defined. It was found that the three clusters with the most approximate laws were Internal Market (20), Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity (17), and Fundamental (14) (Figure 6).

23 '2021 Enlargement package: European Commission assesses and sets out reform priorities for the Western Balkans and Turkey' (*European Commission: European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR)*, 19 October 2021) <https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/2021-enlargement-package-european-commission-assesses-and-sets-out-reform-priorities-western-balkans-2021-10-19_en> accessed 30 April 2024.

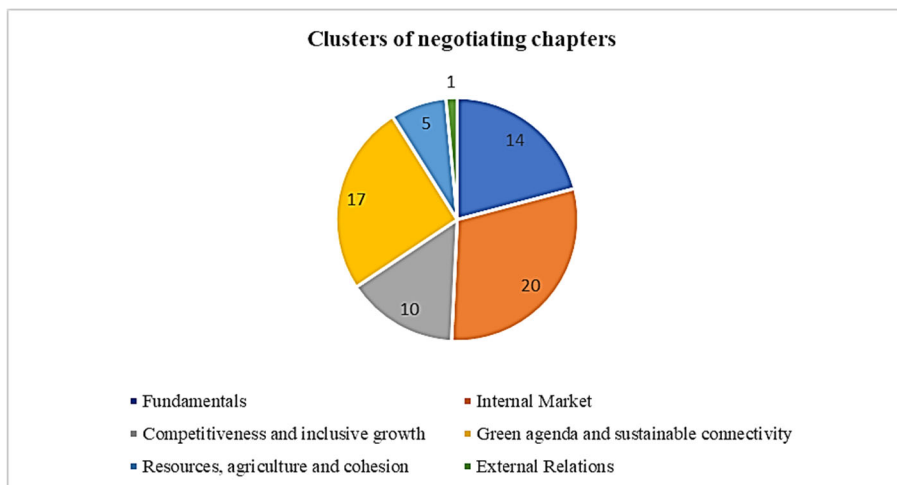


Figure 6. Clusters of negotiating chapters

In addition to identifying the total number of each cluster for 2018 to 2023, the approximation of laws with each cluster of negotiating chapters was also identified for each year. The aim was to look at the trend of law approximation with each cluster annually (Figure 7).

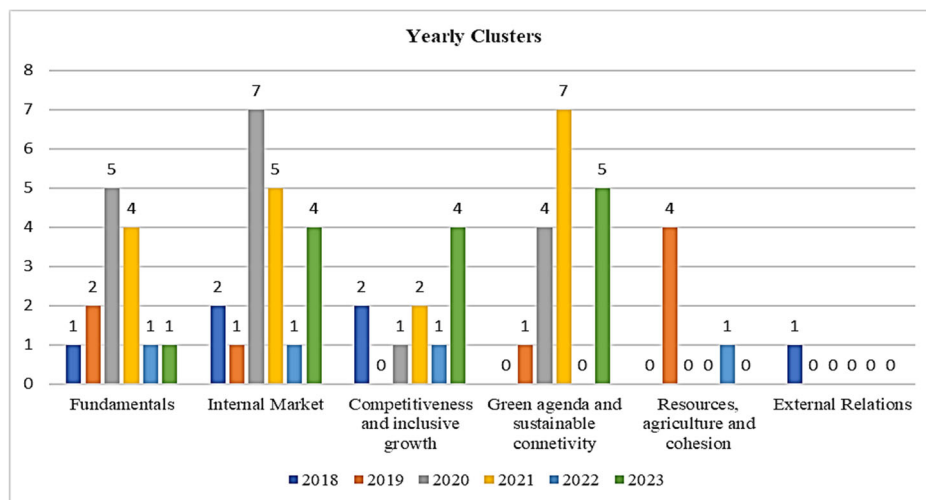


Figure 7. Yearly clusters

The one-way ANOVA test, commonly utilised to compare multiple groups, was used to analyse the difference between the means of the numbers of laws approved for each of the six fields of approximation. It determines whether the dependent variable (the number of approximated laws) changes across different categories of independent variables (the six

clusters of negotiating chapters) within the study period. ANOVA's null hypothesis (H0) is that there is no difference among group means. The alternative hypothesis (Ha) is that at least one group differs significantly from the overall mean of the dependent variable. The statistical significance of ANOVA is determined using the F-test. This method enables the comparison of multiple means simultaneously, as the error is calculated for the entire set of comparisons rather than for each two-way comparison. The F-test compares the variance in each group mean to the overall group variance. If the variance within groups is smaller than the variance between groups, the F-test will yield a higher F value, indicating a greater likelihood that the observed difference is genuine and not due to chance.²⁴

By comparing the approximation of the six different clusters from 2018 to 2023 using the one-way ANOVA test, the results showed no statistical difference between the six clusters of negotiating chapters ($p = 0.06235846$). Although the result is close to being significant ($p < 0.05$), it is not statistically significant. Based on the ANOVA test, there is no significant difference in the variance of means among the clusters during the study period. The Internal Market cluster had the highest priority, with 20 laws approximated and an average of 3.3 laws per year. On the other hand, the External Relations cluster was the least prioritised, with only one law approximated and an average of 0.16 laws per year (refer to Table 2).

Table 2. One-way ANOVA Test for six clusters of negotiating chapters

SUMMARY						
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance		
Fundamentals	6	14	2.333333333	3.066666667		
Internal Market	6	20	3.333333333	5.866666667		
Competitiveness and inclusive growth	6	10	1.666666667	1.866666667		
Green agenda and sustainable connectivity	6	17	2.833333333	8.566666667		
Resources, agriculture, and cohesion	6	5	0.833333333	2.566666667		

24 Hun Myoung Park, 'Comparing Group Means: T-tests and One-way ANOVA Using Stata, SAS, R, and SPSS' (*Indiana University IUScholarWorks*, August 2009) <<https://hdl.handle.net/2022/19735>> accessed 30 April 2024.

External Relations	6	1	0.166666667	0.166666667		
ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	43.80555556	5	8.761111111	2.378582202	0.06235846	2.533554548
Within Groups	110.5	30	3.683333333			
Total	154.3055556	35				

5 DISCUSSIONS

In this section, the authors will discuss the results of the data and the factors that might have influenced them. Where appropriate, the current data will be compared to those between 2009 and 2018 (as of 14 June 2018). This data is part of the author P. Beqiraj's dissertation.

First, compared to the total number of laws passed by Parliament, the number of approximated laws is low. Out of the 702 laws passed between 2018 and 2023, only 64 laws were approximated. Parliament's approval of a low number of approximated laws was also observed between 2009 and 2018 (as of June 2018). 91 laws were approximated to the EU *acquis* between 2009 and 2018 (as of June 2018) out of 1358 laws approved by Parliament during that period, as was identified in P. Beqiraj's dissertation. Since the entry into force of the SAA in 2009, only a small number of laws approved by Parliament have been approximated to the EU *acquis*. The authors attribute this low number of laws to the use of executive branch by-laws to achieve legislative approximation during this phase.

The data indicates that the number of approximated laws is low compared to those approved each year from 2018 to 2023. Upon further investigation, it was found that although the number of laws passed in 2018 is almost similar to that of 2023, the number of laws approximated in 2023 is more than double that of 2018. The variation in the number of approximated laws during the study period, with a peak in 2021 and a significant decline in 2022, suggests that external factors can influence the legislative agenda. The opening of EU negotiations with Albania in July 2022 may have contributed to the increase in approximate laws in 2023. Additionally, it demonstrates how European integration commitments can impact priorities and internal legislative processes.

Regarding the EU act to which laws were approximated, EU directives were the most used, followed by the regulations. The internal legislation of the Republic of Albania has yet to have specific rules for selecting national acts to approximate EU legislation. However, based on the Constitution, mandatory rules must be followed. Therefore, if EU acts that will be

approximated are in the field of human rights,²⁵ taxation,²⁶ etc., a law must be adopted for their approximation as the Constitution allows for the approval of a law to regulate these areas. For example, Law no. 33/2022, dated 31 March 2022, "For open data and reuse of public sector information", was adopted in the field of human rights, according to our research.²⁷ The others were in the field of taxation.

When selecting a law to approximate, it is crucial to consider the relevant EU act. Laws must be adopted to approximate the directives that grant rights and obligations to natural and legal persons and for the approximation of regulations. Directives that aim to amend existing laws should also be transposed by a law of Parliament.²⁸

Data collected from research on the approximation of laws between 2018 and 2023 shows that out of 64 approximated laws, only one is fully approximated with EU law, while the rest are only partially. Between 2009 and 2018 (as of 14 June), fewer laws were fully approximated with EU acts compared to the total number of approximated laws. Out of 91 laws, only 35 were fully approximated with an EU act, while the remaining 56 were only partially.²⁹ It is worth noting that the number of laws fully approximated between 2009 and 2018 (as of 14 June) was significantly higher than between 2018 and 2023. This raises questions about the pace of the approximation process and the extent to which Albanian laws comply with EU standards. However, it could be argued that the Republic of Albania is still in the pre-accession phase. Full compliance of its national legislation with EU law is a requirement for a country's membership in the EU.

Concerning the approximated fields, out of a total of 24 fields identified from the approximated laws, only two laws were approximated relating to the judiciary and fundamental rights, and six laws were approximated in the fields of justice, freedom, and security (refer to Figure 5). These fields belong respectively to Chapter 23 and Chapter 24 of the approximation or Cluster 1 "Fundamentals". This cluster is still in the process of approximation because, due to its importance, it opens first and closes last. One of the key features of the revised methodology is the focus on strengthening the rule of law conditionality, which means that negotiations will be opened and closed within the rule of law cluster.³⁰

During 2024, Albania aims to align its laws with the EU *acquis* in the areas of Chapter 23 and Chapter 24 of the "Fundamentals" Cluster, which are important for access to justice and human rights. This includes the draft laws: "The Criminal Code of the Republic of Albania",

25 Constitution of the Republic of Albania (n 9) art 17.

26 *ibid*, art 155.

27 Law no 33/2022, dated 31 March 2022, 'For open data and reuse of public sector information' [2022] Official Journals of the Republic of Albania 65/8457 <<http://qbz.gov.al/eli/ligj/2022/03/31/33>> accessed 30 April 2024.

28 Lazowski and others (n 8).

29 Beqiraj (n 11) 3.

30 Vlajković and Tasev (n 3).

“For the establishment of the Office of Asset Recovery”, “For the protection of personal data”, and “For concessions and public-private partnership”.³¹

According to the relevant cluster of negotiating chapters, “Internal Market” is the leading cluster with 20 approximate laws. This is consistent with the period from 2009 to 2018 (as of 14 June). Even during this period, the largest number of laws has been approximated in the field of the internal market, with a total of 14 laws.³² The obligation placed by the SAA with the approximation of the internal market from the beginning stages of the legislation approximation process is an argument for this result.³³

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study data revealed a quantifiable difference between the total number of laws approved and those approximated by Parliament from 2018 to 2023. Therefore, to approximate national legislation with that of the EU, Parliament should increase the trend of approving laws aimed at approximating the legislation. The executive power should play an important role in this direction. The CoM influences Parliament’s legislative agenda by proposing draft laws that are later approved. The pace and efficiency of the approximation process are important to ensure full approximation of Albanian legislation with EU legislation.

The degree of full approximation of the national legislation should continue at a higher rate. From 2018 to 2023, only one law was fully approximated with the EU acquis, indicating a low degree of full approximation of our laws.

To increase access for citizens, academics, and researchers of European law, it is recommended that a parliamentary platform be drafted on the legislative activity of Parliament in the field of approximation of legislation. The official website of Parliament (<https://www.parlament.al>) has important gaps in the laws aligned with EU law from 2018 to 2023 in the European Integration (Approximation of Legislation) section. During the course of this study, two notable areas of concern were identified:

a. There is currently no available information on the approximated laws for the years 2018, 2019, and 2020, as well as for the periods of January to June 2021 and October to December 2023.

b. Our searches in the Official Journals of the Republic of Albania did not find some of the laws listed as approximated on the official website of Parliament:

1. Law no. 37/2022, dated 14 April 2022, “For some additions and changes in law no. 35/2016 “On copyright and other related rights” is mentioned as approximated in

31 Decision of the Council of Ministers no 16 (n 1).

32 Beqiraj (n 11) 3.

33 Stabilisation and Association Agreement (n 4) art 70, para 3.

the April - June 2022 newsletter³⁴ but does not appear as such in the corresponding Official Journal in which it was published.³⁵

2. Similarly, Law no. 91/2021, dated 1 July 2021, "For the establishment, organization and operation of the National Authority for the Investigation of Railway and Maritime Accidents and Incidents" is mentioned as approximated in the July - September 2021 Parliament newsletter³⁶ but not based on the Official Journal where it was published.³⁷
3. Law no. 84/2022, dated 24 November 2022, "For the 2023 Budget" is listed as approximated in the October - December 2022 newsletter,³⁸ yet budget laws are not approximated, as can be verified in the Official Journal where they are published.³⁹

It may be worth considering revising and adjusting the information provided on Parliament's official webpage to align it with the data from the Republic of Albania's Official Journals.

Approximation contributes to the quality of the legal framework. The approximated laws are more stable and effective, with higher standards that align with the EU's. Furthermore, the improved legislative techniques in drafting approximated laws result from the collaboration between national and international experts.

The importance of increasing the approximation of Albanian legislation lies in the fact that it has a direct effect on individuals and enterprises. If national laws approximate with the EU *acquis*, they may have greater access to legal remedies. Also, the approximation process can significantly improve access to justice by fostering the growth of more transparent,

34 'Newsletter i Kuvendit mbi çështjet europiane, nr 15' (*Republika e Shqipërisë Kuvendi*, Prill-Qershor 2022) <<https://kuvendiwebfiles.blob.core.windows.net/webfiles/202301051323031581Newsletter%20i%20Kuvendit%20mbi%20c%CC%A7e%CC%88shtjet%20europiane%20nr.%2015%20pe%CC%88r%20periudhe%CC%88n%20Prill-Qershor%202022.pdf>> accessed 3 April 2024.

35 Law no 37/2022, dated 14 April 2022, 'For some additions and changes in Law no 35/2016 "On Copyright and other Related Rights"' [2022] Official Journals of the Republic of Albania 69/8607 <<https://qbz.gov.al/eli/fz/2022/69/c657e445-6e75-4283-9042-02590484132f>> accessed 3 April 2024.

36 'Newsletter i Kuvendit mbi çështjet europiane, nr 12' (*Republika e Shqipërisë Kuvendi*, Korrik-Shtator 2021) <<https://kuvendiwebfiles.blob.core.windows.net/webfiles/202301051322300117Newsletter%20i%20Kuvendit%20mbi%20c%CC%A7e%CC%88shtjet%20europiane%20nr.12%20pe%CC%88r%20periudhe%CC%88n%20korrik-shtator%202021.pdf>> accessed 3 April 2024.

37 Law no 91/2021, dated 1 July 2021, 'For the establishment, organization and operation of the National Authority for the Investigation of Railway and Maritime Accidents and Incidents' [2021] Official Journals of the Republic of Albania 125/12972 <<https://qbz.gov.al/eli/fz/2021/125/3ad6c11a-71e1-4b1b-9150-6cdb7c00d16c>> accessed 3 April 2024.

38 'Newsletter i Kuvendit mbi çështjet europiane, nr 17' (*Republika e Shqipërisë Kuvendi*, Tetor-Dhjetor 2022) <<https://kuvendiwebfiles.blob.core.windows.net/webfiles/202303230832219946Newsletter%20i%20Kuvendit%20mbi%20c%CC%A7eshtjet%20europiane%20nr.%2017%20per%20periudhen%20tetor-dhjetor%202022.pdf.pdf>> accessed 3 April 2024.

39 Law no 84/2022, dated 24 November 2022, 'For the 2023 Budget' [2022] Official Journals of the Republic of Albania 171/21673 <<https://qbz.gov.al/eli/fz/2022/171/f8ae9877-58a5-49c2-9cc6-0eab8276df82>> accessed 3 April 2024.

accountable, and functional legal systems that defend fundamental rights and guarantee the effectiveness of the rule of law.

In conclusion, analysing the role of Parliament in EU integration through the approximation of national legislation from 2018 to 2023 highlights the multidimensional nature of the integration process and the important contribution made so far by the legislative power. The study reveals Parliament's substantial efforts in approximating national legislation with EU legislation, as proven by the results of the study. Moving forward, the CoM must address possible challenges to advance Albania's EU membership agenda. Learning from experience, Albania can and should increase its prospects for successful integration into the EU.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1. Official Journals of the Republic of Albania: Approximated laws 2018-2023

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2. *Official Journal of the Republic of Albania*, no 79 (Center of Offic Publ, 30 May 2018) <<https://qbz.gov.al/eli/fz/2018/79/63abe2a7-88f8-4978-912b-681593b9e996>> accessed 30 April 2024.
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49. *Official Journal of the Republic of Albania*, no 64 (Center of Offic Publ, 14 April 2023) <<https://qbz.gov.al/eli/fz/2023/64/f09b817b-fa08-4614-82e9-4dab85d6f646>> accessed 30 April 2024.
50. *Official Journal of the Republic of Albania*, no 70 (Center of Offic Publ, 2 May 2023) <<https://qbz.gov.al/eli/fz/2023/70/d9149c47-18e6-449b-b40b-e12ed54bac3d>> accessed 30 April 2024.
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52. *Official Journal of the Republic of Albania*, no 101 (Center of Offic Publ, 7 July 2023) <<https://qbz.gov.al/eli/fz/2023/101/a19bb232-978e-4f38-9eef-4d6d2c47b5cb>> accessed 30 April 2024.
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Annex 2. Approximated laws 2018-2023

The laws approximated in 2018

Official Journals of the Republic of Albania 2018, no: 59, 79, 86, 115, 162, 187:

1. Law no. 17/2018, dated 5 April 2018, 'For official statistics';
2. Law no. 25/2018, dated 1 May 2018, 'For accounting and financial statements';
3. Law no. 27/2018, dated 17 May 2018, 'For cultural heritage and museums';
4. Law no. 46/2018, dated 23 July 2018, 'For state control of international transfers of military goods and dual-use items and technologies';
5. Law no. 71/2018, dated 18 October 2018, 'For some changes and additions to Law no. 9902, dated 17 April 2008 "For consumer protection" as amended';
6. Law no. 98/2018, dated 3 December 2018, 'For some additions and changes in Law no. 61/2012 "On Excise Duty in the Republic of Albania" as amended'.

The laws approximated in 2019

Official Journals of the Republic of Albania 2019, no: 21, 33, 58, 131, 113, 111, 111:

1. Law no. 4/2019, dated 7 February 2019, 'For some changes and additions to Law no. 64/2012 "On fishing" as amended';
2. Law no 8/2019, dated 26 February 2019, 'For quality schemes of agricultural products';
3. Law no 22/2019, dated 21 September 2019, 'For some changes and additions to Law no. 103/2016 "On aquaculture";
4. Law no 44/2019, dated 18 July 2019, 'For some additions and changes in Law no. 7895, dated 27.1.1995 "Criminal Code of the Republic of Albania" as amended';
5. Law no. 45/2019, dated 18 July 2019, 'For civil protection';
6. Law no. 46/2019, dated 18 July 2019, 'For some changes and additions to Law no. 10 006, dated 23 October 2008 "On the protection of wild fauna" as amended';
7. Law no. 56/2019, dated 18 July 2019, 'For some changes and additions to Law no. 9636, dated 6 November 2006 "On health protection from tobacco products" as amended'.

The laws approximated in 2020

Official Journals of the Republic of Albania 2020, no: 3, 23, 31, 32, 54, 118, 80, 96, 123, 104, 131, 146, 149, 222, 202, 230:

1. Law no. 87/2019, dated 18 December 2019, 'For the invoice and traffic monitoring system';
2. Law no. 4/2020, dated 30 January 2020, 'For the automatic exchange of financial account information';

3. Law no. 13/2020, dated 13 February 2020, 'For some changes and additions to Law no. 108/2013 "For foreigners" as amended';
4. Law no. 21/2020, dated 5 March 2020, 'For some additions and changes in Law no. 89/2014 "On medical devices";
5. Law no. 22/2020, dated 5 March 2020, 'For some additions to Law no. 71/2016 "On border control";
6. Law no. 36/2020, dated 16 April 2020, 'For procurements in the field of defense and security';
7. Law no. 41/2020, dated 23 April 2020, 'For some amendments and additions to Law no. 9587, dated 20 July 2006, "On the protection of biodiversity" as amended';
8. Law no. 55/2020, dated 30 April 2020, 'For payment services';
9. Law no. 56/2020, dated 30 April 2020, 'For collective investment undertakings';
10. Law no. 57/2020, dated 30 April 2020, 'For forests';
11. Law no. 62/2020, dated 14 May 2020, 'For capital markets';
12. Law no. 96/2020, dated 23 July 2020, 'Air code of the Republic of Albania';
13. Law no. 112/2020, dated 29 July 2020, 'For the register of beneficial owners';
14. Law no. 126/2020, dated 15 October 2020, 'For metrology';
15. Law no. 128/2020, dated 22 October 2020, 'For some changes and additions to Law no. 10440, dated 7 July 2011 "On environmental impact assessment" as amended';
16. Law no. 140/2020, dated 26 November 2020, 'For the population and housing census'.

The laws approximated in 2021

Official Journals of the Republic of Albania 2021, no: 3, 5, 5, 28, 30, 52, 68, 90, 107, 107, 125, 125, 125, 162, 195, 197, 197:

1. Law no. 152/2020, dated 17 December 2020, 'For some changes and additions to Law no. 74/2014 "On weapons";
2. Law no. 154/2020, dated 17 December 2020, 'For the central register of bank accounts';
3. Law no. 155/2020, dated 17 December 2020, 'On climate change';
4. Law no. 162/2020, dated 23 December 2020, 'For public procurement';
5. Law no. 10/2021, dated 1 February 2021, 'For asylum in the Republic of Albania';
6. Law no. 28/2021, dated 8 March 2021, 'For some changes and additions to Law no. 124/2015 "On energy efficiency" as amended';
7. Law no. 32/2021 dated 16 March 2021, 'For compulsory insurance in the transport sector';

8. Law no. 63/2021, dated 7 May 2021, 'For some additions and changes in Law no. 8378 dated 22 July 1998, "Road Code of the Republic of Albania" as amended';
9. Law no. 73/2021, dated 3 June 2021, 'For placing on the market and supervision of pyrotechnic articles';
10. Law no. 74/2021, dated 3 June 2021, 'For placing on the market and supervision of explosives for civil use';
11. Law no. 88/2021, dated 1 July 2021, 'For the establishment of the Railway Safety Authority';
12. Law no. 89/2021, dated 1 July 2021, 'For the establishment of the Railway Regulatory Authority';
13. Law no. 90/2021, dated 1 July 2021, 'For the division of the company "Albanian railway", sh. a';
14. Law no. 96/2021, dated 7 July 2021, 'For some changes and additions to Law no. 9947, dated 7 July 2008, "On industrial ownership" as amended';
15. Law no. 79/2021, dated 24 June 2021, 'For foreigners';
16. Law no. 114/2021, dated 25 November 2021, 'For some changes and additions to Law no. 61/2012 "On excise duties in the Republic of Albania" as amended';
17. Law no. 111/2021 dated 25 December 2021, 'For some additions and changes in Law no. 92/2014 "On value added tax in the Republic of Albania" as amended';
18. Law no. 120/2021 dated 2 December 2021, 'For some amendments and additions to Law no. 9917 dated 19 May 2008, "On the prevention of money laundering and financing of terrorism" as amended'.

The laws approximated in 2022

Official Journals of the Republic of Albania 2022, no: 65, 74, 90, 170:

1. Law no. 33/2022 dated 31 March 2022, 'For open data and reuse of public sector information';
2. Law no. 36/2022 dated 14 April 2022, 'For the organization and operation of local action groups';
3. Law no. 43/2022 dated 21 April 2022, 'For the development of micro, small and medium enterprises';
4. Law no. 82/2022 dated 24 November 2022, 'For some additions and changes in Law no. 92/2014 "On value added tax in the Republic of Albania" as amended'.

The laws approximated in 2023

Official Journals of the Republic of Albania 2023, No: 6, 8, 27, 59, 64, 70, 75, 101, 105, 152, 173, 187:

1. Law no. 20/2023 dated 16 March 2023, 'For beekeeping';
2. Law no. 24/2023 dated 23 March 2023, 'For promoting the use of energy from renewable sources';
3. Law no. 27/2023 dated 23 March 2023, 'For the control of trade in products which may be used for capital punishment, torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment';
4. Law no. 86/2022, dated 22 December 2022, 'For viticulture and wine';
5. Law no. 95/2022 dated 22 December 2022, 'For some changes and additions to Law no. 105/2014 "On drugs and pharmaceutical service" as amended';
6. Law no. 2/2023 dated 26 January 2023, 'For fluorinated greenhouse gasses';
7. Law no. 29/2023 dated 30 January 2023, 'For income tax';
8. Law no. 30/2023 dated 13 April 2023, 'For some changes and additions to Law no. 97/2013 "For audiovisual media in the Republic of Albania" as amended';
9. Law no. 44/2023 dated 15 June 2023, 'For some additions and changes in Law no. 69/2012 "On the pre-university education system in the Republic of Albania" as amended';
10. Law no. 50/2023 dated 22 June 2023, "For some additions and changes in Law no. 9774 dated 12.7.2007 "On the evaluation and management of noise in the environment" as amended';
11. Law no. 76/2023 dated 21 September 2023, 'For private pension funds';
12. Law no. 92/2023 dated 2 November 2023, 'For some additions and changes in Law no. 116/2014 "On the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies in the Republic of Albania";
13. Law no. 95/2023 dated 7 December 2023, 'For some additions and changes in Law no. 9920 dated 19 May 2008, "On tax procedures in the Republic of Albania" as amended'.

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АНОТАЦІЯ УКРАЇНСЬКОЮ МОВОЮ

Дослідницька стаття

РОЛЬ ПАРЛАМЕНТУ АЛБАНІЇ В ІНТЕГРАЦІЇ ДО ЄС ЧЕРЕЗ АПРОКСИМАЦІЮ НАЦІОНАЛЬНОГО ЗАКОНОДАВСТВА (СІЧЕНЬ 2018 РОКУ – ГРУДЕНЬ 2023 РОКУ)

Пранвера Бетірай*, Доріна Діпалі та Крістінка Янче

АНОТАЦІЯ

Вступ. Переговори Республіки Албанія (далі - Албанія) щодо членства країни в Європейському Союзі (ЄС) офіційно розпочалися 19 липня 2022 року. Процес полягатиме, зокрема, у наближенні національного законодавства до асquis ЄС, яке поділено на шість тематичних кластерів. Албанія повинна досягти повної відповідності законодавства країни до асquis ЄС та його успішного впровадження. Переговори та наступне членство в ЄС сприятимуть демократизації та зміцненню верховенства права в Албанії. У цьому дослідженні розглядається роль Парламенту Албанії (далі – Парламент) в процесі інтеграції в ЄС через апроксимацію національного законодавства. Це підготовче дослідження служить наріжним каменем для подальшої роботи над проблемою і академічних досліджень щодо участі албанського парламенту в європейській інтеграції через процес наближення національного законодавства. Таким чином, для країни апроксимації національного законодавства до законодавства ЄС, рекомендується, щоб Парламент посилив тенденцію до ухвалення законів, спрямованих на цей процес.

Методи. Було проведено перехресне дослідження з метою вивчення законодавчої діяльності Парламенту у період з 2018 до 2023 роки щодо наближення національного законодавства до асquis ЄС. У дослідженні використовувався підготовчий аналіз для вивчення щорічної кількості законів, прийнятих і наближених до законодавства ЄС. Надійні джерела з Офіційних журналів Албанії були використані для збору даних про закони, прийняті та наближені протягом досліджуваного періоду, що забезпечує розуміння загальної кількості законів, прийнятих та наближених за кожен рік, а також про відповідний акт ЄС, і кластери розділів переговорів.

Результати та висновки. Аналіз ролі Парламенту, щодо європейської інтеграції за допомогою наближення національного законодавства з 2018 до 2023 роки, підкреслює багатовимірний характер процесу інтеграції та важливий внесок, зроблений до цього часу законодавчою владою. Протягом періоду, вказаного у статті, Парламент доклав важливих зусиль для наближення національного законодавства до законодавства ЄС, про що свідчать результати дослідження. На основі даних цієї роботи було виявлено різницю, яка піддається кількісному вимірюванню, між загальною кількістю законів, ухвалених і наблизених Парламентом з 2018 до 2023 року. Висновки та рекомендації дослідження забезпечують повне розуміння проблем і можливостей апроксимації албанського законодавства до *acquis* ЄС та втілення програми європейської інтеграції країни.

Ключові слова: Парламент Албанії, процес інтеграції, апроксимація національного законодавства, *acquis* ЄС, Офіційний журнал.