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Believers, Sceptics and the Weary: Albanian Public Opinion on the European Union from the Euronews Albania Barometer (November 2023)

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Abstract

This paper examines Albanian public attitudes toward the European Union and the accession process, drawing on a nationally representative survey (N = 1,000) conducted in November 2023 as part of the Euronews Albania Barometer, with data collection by Datacentrum. The analysis identifies a distinctive Albanian configuration that the existing comparative literature on enlargement fatigue does not fully capture. On the one hand, Albanians remain overwhelmingly pro-European: 85.2% hold a positive view of the EU, 66.6% agree that EU membership is "the only future" for Albania, and 55.3% expect Albania to join within ten years. On the other hand, the same public is exhausted by the process: 69.9% agree that Albanians are tired after thirty years of integration and no longer believe it will happen, and 14.4% say Albania will never become a member. Albanians overwhelmingly internalise responsibility for the delay — attributing it to domestic corruption (70.3%) and to the country's crime-related image abroad (66.1%) — while decisively rejecting the religion-based explanation (only 10.8% accept that the EU rejects Albania because of its Muslim majority). The paper argues that Albanian public opinion combines deep pro-European affect with high domestic self-criticism and growing process-fatigue, producing a distinctive configuration that the existing enlargement-fatigue literature does not fully capture.

Keywords: Albania; European Union; EU Accession; Public Opinion; Enlargement Fatigue; Western Balkans; Berlin Process; Survey Research