

LACK OF BALANCE IN ALBANIAN FOREIGN POLICY

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ABSTRACT

Albania has never been closer to the European Union. It is a candidate country for an EU membership. The European Union decided to open the access to negotiations with Albania in March 2020. Albania is working closely with the EU to undertake reforms required for its EU accession path. While its foreign policy is being oriented to EU, Albania maintains good relations with other actors. U.S. is another Albania's main ally. Albania shares many interests with U.S. and calibrates its foreign policy with Washington. But Albania is also under Turkey's radar. The EU is not against the pursuit of an Albanian foreign policy with several alternatives as long as Tirana maintains a balance between the allies and determines the priorities. This article aims to shed light on the balance Albania is supposed to maintain among its partners. Such platform will be efficient in its foreign policy only if it does not upset the balance with its allies. As a small state, it will benefit from allies if their strategies are aligned with Albanian interests. Therefore, Albania must develop a clear Western orientation in foreign policy – an orientation that often needs to be calibrated. The article concludes that small states can compensate for the limitations of their size and weak capacities, and exert influence on regional politics and beyond, only if they implement an efficient – and necessarily balanced – strategy.

Keywords: Balance, G-Zero, foreign policy, pivot, interests.