

Journal of European Public Policy >

Volume 16, 2009 - [Issue 7](#)

7,044 Views | 115 CrossRef citations to date | 0 Altmetric

Original Articles

Fake, partial and imposed compliance: the limits of the EU's normative power in the Western Balkans

Gergana Noutcheva 

Pages 1065-1084 | Published online: 30 Sep 2009

 Cite this article  <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501760903226872>

Sample our
Politics & International
Relations Journals 
>> [Sign in here](#) to start your access
to the latest two volumes for 14 days

 Full Article  Figures & data  References  Citations  Metrics

 Reprints & Permissions

[Read this article](#)

[Share](#)

Abstract

This article examines the EU's external power through the prism of perceptions by non-EU countries of the aims of EU's foreign policy, as shown in the Western Balkans. It argues that the EU's policy in the Western Balkans lacks a strong normative justification, which affects the degree of compliance with the EU's demands in areas related to state sovereignty. The perceived lack of legitimacy opens up political space for domestic actors to contest the positions taken by the EU on normative grounds. The Western Balkan countries have responded by giving preference to internal sources of legitimacy and asserting domestic reasons for fake compliance, partial compliance or non-compliance with the EU's conditions, with the latter provoking imposed compliance. The article links the enlargement literature with the study of EU foreign

policy by offering a new approach to analysing the normative and strategic dimensions of the EU's external power.

Keywords:

Compliance

EU conditionality

European foreign policy

Europeanization

legitimacy

'normative power Europe'

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank the European Foreign and Security Studies Programme of the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, the Compagnia di San Paolo and the Volkswagen Stiftung for support of her research. She is grateful to the anonymous referees for their constructive feedback on earlier versions of the article.

Notes

See the text of the Belgrade Agreement, reprinted in CEPS Europa South-East Monitor, No. 32, CEPS, Brussels, March 2002 (available from <http://www.ceps.be>).

Derived from interviews with EU officials, May 2002–September 2004.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

See European Commission, Report from the Commission to the Council on the preparedness of Bosnia and Herzegovina to negotiate a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union (Feasibility Study) COM(2003) 692 final, Brussels, 18 November 2003.

See the Law on the Indirect Taxation System in Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted in December 2003, after intensive domestic negotiations under international supervision in the framework of the Indirect Taxation Policy Commission chaired by Jolly Dixon.

See documents under the heading 'Police Restructuring in Bosnia and Herzegovina' on the website of the Office of the High Representative and EU Special Representative (available from <http://www.ohr.int/ohr-dept/rule-of-law-pillar/prc/>).

Derived from interviews with EU Commission officials, Brussels, May–July 2005.

Derived from interviews with EU Council officials, Brussels, April–May 2004.

See International Monetary Fund (IMF), Bosnia and Herzegovina: Selected Economic Issues, IMF Country Report No. 05/198, IMF, Washington, DC, June 2005.

See, for instance, Office of the High Representative and EU Special Representative, 'New Year's Message to the People of Bosnia & Herzegovina from Paddy Ashdown, High Representative and European Union Special Representative', Sarajevo, 31 December 2003 (available from <http://www.ohr.int>).

See also the speech by European Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn, 'Introductory Remarks on Western Balkans', SPEECH/07/170, delivered at the European Parliament, Foreign Affairs Committee, Brussels, 21 March 2007(a) (available from <http://www.europa.eu>).

Derived from interviews with EU member state officials in Brussels, October 2006–March 2007.

Ibid.

For differences among the EU member states, see D. Dombey and N. MacDonald, 'Europe Divided over Kosovo', Financial Times, 7 March 2007.

Gros (2002) estimated the potential loss for the average household in Montenegro solely in the textile sector as €150 per year and for the Montenegrin economy as a whole in the region of €45 million annually.

For further information, see the G17 Plus website (available from <http://www.g17plus.org.yu/english/index.html>).

Ibid.

Quotes from an interview of Central Bank Governor and G17 Plus leader Dinkic for Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 28 January 2003.

See Office of the High Representative, 31st Report of the High Representative for Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Sarajevo, 16 May 2007 (available from <http://www.ohr.int>).

Derived from interviews with party officials, Sarajevo, December 2003.

Derived from interviews with party officials, Banja Luka, December 2003.

Address by Mladen Ivanic, Co-chair of the House of Peoples of BiH and former Minister for Foreign Affairs, to the high-level European Policy Summit 'A Balkans Balance Sheet', Brussels, 24 June 2008.

Derived from interviews with Serbian government officials, November 2006–January 2007.

Ibid.



Related research

People also read

Recommended articles

Cited by
115

Information for

[Authors](#)

[R&D professionals](#)

[Editors](#)

[Librarians](#)

[Societies](#)

Opportunities

[Reprints and e-prints](#)

[Advertising solutions](#)

[Accelerated publication](#)

[Corporate access solutions](#)

Open access

[Overview](#)

[Open journals](#)

[Open Select](#)

[Dove Medical Press](#)

[F1000Research](#)

Help and information

[Help and contact](#)

[Newsroom](#)

[All journals](#)

[Books](#)

Keep up to date

Register to receive personalised research and resources by email



Sign me up



Copyright © 2026 Informa UK Limited [Privacy policy](#)

[Cookies](#) [Terms & conditions](#) [Accessibility](#)

Registered in England & Wales No. 01072954
5 Howick Place | London | SW1P 1WG

 Taylor and Francis
Group