

Abstract

This study investigates the impact of European Union conditionality, both before and after Bulgaria's accession. It assesses how conditionality has influenced political and economic reforms in the country over three distinct time frames. Between 1995 and 2004, pre-accession conditionality played a significant role in implementing the legislative and institutional changes necessary for Bulgaria to align with the political and economic criteria outlined in the Copenhagen Agreement. From 2004 to 2007, European Union conditionality facilitated reforms in areas like corruption control, the enhancement of the judicial system, and modifications in public administration. Subsequent to accession, post-accession conditionality had a more limited impact, effectively driving changes in judicial reform but falling short in ensuring the efficient enforcement of anti-corruption measures. This analysis indicates that European Union conditionality has been successful in encouraging effective reforms, with only minor distinctions observed in the influence of pre-accession conditionality when compared to post-accession conditionality.