

# Legal Perspectives on EU Integration Process of BIH: Analyses of the European Commission Progress Report 2013 for BIH

**Elvir Čolak**

Social Science Research Center  
Bosnia and Herzegovina  
*elvir.colak@ibu.edu.ba*

**Kemal Balihodžić**

International Burch University  
Bosnia and Herzegovina  
*kemal.balihadzic@ibu.edu.ba*

**Abstract:** *Bosnia and Herzegovina has gained a status of “potential candidate country” for the accession to the European Union by the decision of the European Council in Thessaloniki in 2003, and has thus faced many obstacles in its integration process to the European Union. According to the EU integration criterion that takes a form in the economic, political, social and legal context, the authors of this paper raise the question on the legal context and issues that BH has to overcome in order to come closer to the EU idea. In this regard, the paper analyses the European commission 2013 progress report for BH as the main source as well as other relevant secondary reports in order to outline the issues in hand. The paper aims to elaborate the EU-BH integration process within the framework of legal obligations highlighting the legal instruments, institutions, systems and structures that define the legal context in this regards. Unfortunately, there are many legal challenges and the need to reform core institutional structures within the state as well as developing a practical and theoretical strategy for the BH-EU accession process that harmonizes the regulations within BH of that within the EU. Without analyzing the political criteria and the role within foreign policy, BH still has structural and institutional issues from the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) and lacks sufficient legal requirements, and the insufficient acknowledgement for the rule of law.*

**Keywords:** *EU integration process, Rule of Law, legal criteria, EU accession, legal obligation, integration strategy, EU progress report 2013 for BH, European commission*