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Authors: Tzifakis, N., Professor, University of the Peloponnese, Koppa, M., Professor, Panteion University

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Abstract

The book studies the Europeanization of the Western Balkan countries. Unlike technical studies and EU reports, the book is not confined to registering and assessing the current progress in the accession process of the Western Balkan countries. Instead, it aims to familiarize the reader with contemporary history, prevailing social, national, and cultural perceptions, and the main political and economic choices of the countries in the region. In other words, the book attempts to explain the origins and the causes of the long-standing challenges to the Europeanization of the Western Balkans. The book sheds light on the historical process of nation-building in the region and brings to the fore some of the dominant national myths that have been constructed (and reconstructed) over time. This way, it analyses the historical roots of contemporary

conflicts in the Western Balkans and explains each side's perceptions and aspirations. Similarly, it examines the region's troublesome political and economic transition after the end of the Cold War in the adverse environment generated by the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the outbreak of successive armed conflicts. Therefore, it accounts for the delay in consolidating democracy in the Western Balkan countries. At the same time, it examines the engagement in regional affairs of the international community, which has played a decisive role over the last three decades. Overall, the book offers a comprehensive and multifaceted analysis of contemporary Western Balkan history, focusing on state-building, conflict resolution, and reform implementation challenges on the path to the region's full integration into the EU structures.

