



# *Akademik Eğitim ve Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* (AJESS Journal)

## *Croatian Public Law, Constitutional Transformation, and Adriatic Governance*

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### **Article History**

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### **Abstract**

This paper provides an extensive critical analysis of contemporary Croatian public law, legal history, and Adriatic constitutionalism. Focusing on the 1990 Christmas Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, democratic state-building, and the jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court (Ustavni sud Republike Hrvatske), this study evaluates how Croatian legal institutions harmonize post-socialist legal transition with European Union membership. Furthermore, it highlights advancements in Adriatic environmental preservation, maritime law, and digital administrative governance.

**Keywords:** Croatian public law, socialist legal, administrative governance

### **1. Introduction:**

#### **Croatian Legal Foundations and Central European Traditions**

The Croatian legal system occupies a unique position in Central and Southeastern European legal history, combining Central European civil law foundations with modern Mediterranean maritime legal doctrine. Centred around historic academic institutions such as the Faculty of Law at the University of Zagreb (founded in 1776), Croatian legal scholarship has played a vital role in constitutional design, administrative law, and state governance.

From nineteenth-century civil codifications to modern European integration, Croatian jurists have continuously contributed to constitutional rights, judicial independence, and rule of law mechanisms.

This paper examines modern Croatian legal research, exploring constitutional evolution, European integration, maritime jurisdiction, and digital public administration.

#### **2. The 1990 Constitution and the Jurisprudence of the Ustavni Sud**

The adoption of the 1990 Constitution (Božićni ustav) established the Republic of Croatia as a sovereign, democratic state based on freedom, equal rights, and rule of law. Scholars at the University of Zagreb have extensively analyzed the pivotal role of the Constitutional Court (Ustavni sud) in safeguarding democratic standards.

The Constitutional Court resolves disputes between state powers, enforces individual constitutional complaints, and reviews statutory conformity with constitutional rights guarantees.

This research provides essential insights into managing constitutional transition, protecting human rights, and building resilient legal institutions.

#### **3. European Union Accession, Legal Harmonization, and Administrative Science**

Croatia's accession to the European Union in 2013 marked a significant milestone, accelerating statutory harmonization and public sector reforms.

Croatian public law scholars examine the interaction between national administrative law, the Constitutional Court, and the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU).

Recent scholarly inquiries analyze multi-level administrative governance, public procurement standards, and administrative dispute resolution in Croatia.

#### **4. Adriatic Maritime Jurisdiction, Environmental Law, and Coastal Governance**

Given Croatia's extensive coastline and thousands of islands, maritime law and environmental protection represent core pillars of national jurisprudence.

Legal scholars lead comparative studies on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), coastal domain management, and Adriatic marine biodiversity preservation.

These scholarly contributions offer comprehensive legal frameworks for balancing economic maritime activities, tourism development, and environmental sustainability.

#### **5. Digital Governance, E-Administration, and Contemporary Legal Reforms**

Croatia has implemented significant administrative modernizations aimed at digitizing public services, enhancing e-governance platforms, and streamlining civic administrative processes.

Croatian legal researchers focus on statutory frameworks for electronic administration, open government data, and algorithmic fairness in decision-making.

These developments ensure that digital public services maintain transparency, data protection compliance under EU regulations, and procedural due process.

#### **6. Conclusion: The Croatian Legal Model in Contemporary European Scholarship**

The study of Croatian public law reflects a dynamic synthesis of historical heritage, successful post-socialist transformation, and active European integration. Croatia's constitutional model provides valuable lessons for state-building and administrative adaptation.

By integrating constitutional review, EU regulatory standards, maritime domain protection, and digital administration, Croatian legal scholarship remains essential to Central European legal discourse.

Ultimately, the Croatian paradigm demonstrates that democratic stability and rule of law flourish through continuous legal innovation, institutional integrity, and respect for human rights.

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