

Waste Disposal and Recycling in Albania: Case of Lezha Town

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***Abstract:** Albania as a developing country has many social and economic problems and waste is one of them. In every corner of Albania there are waste thrown out on the street and lands. This is mainly caused by the negligence of both people and the central and local governments. Communism period has made people as such and they were not aware of protecting the environment. The second reason for having a waste problem in Albania is that there is a lack of infrastructure and equipment where to dispose or recycle the waste. As one of the main goals of Albania is to join the EU there are criteria to fulfill. Therefore, the governments since 2002 have been adopting the EU legislation about recycling of the waste. Only after 2009 some example of application have been seen and the governments are concerning more on this issue because of the EU's strong advise for putting those legislation into practice. Currently there are 60 recycling companies operating and two new landfills are created to dispose of waste. In Albania the waste can be managed only by landfill and recycling. Recently the government passed a law to permit importing waste in Albania, but a referendum about this law will be held as a final decision. The town of Lezha is the first successful example where the waste is collected in different containers and recycled. In this paper Lezha example will be evaluated by employing primary data taken from Lezha municipality, statistics of INSTAT of Albania and the Ministry of Environment of Albania. The example of Lezha must be adopted by all other municipalities in order to have a clean Albania. Recycling and successful waste management are among the key indicators of advancement, and these two will contribute to development of the economy and living standards in Albania.*

***Keywords:** Waste management, Recycling, EU legislation, Landfill, Lezha, Albania*