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Fast-track arbitration in the Balkans: Are Balkan Arbitration Institutions in line with emerging arbitration trend?

Emilija Gjorgjioska[1]

Abstract

Fast track arbitration is an alternative to traditional arbitration offering parties to settle their disputes with greater efficiency. Often highlighted shortcomings of the arbitration as a not so affordable dispute resolution method, consuming high expenses and time, have been overcome by introducing the expedited or fast track arbitration.

Some renowned arbitration institutions have introduced expedited arbitration as a more efficient way of resolving disputes a few decades ago. In 2021, also the United Nation Commission on International Trade law adopted Expedited Arbitration Rules.

[1]Emilija Gjorgjioska, associate professor, Faculty of Economics – Prilep, University "St. Kliment Ohridski" Bitola, Prilepski braniteli, No. 143, 7500, Prilep, the Republic of North Macedonia, ORCID no: 0000-0002-4061-8062

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The Western Balkan States handling with low public trust into the judicial system, where courts are overburdened and cases take too long to be resolved, the expedited arbitration has enormous potential to further develop. The aim of the article is to examine the situation in the Balkan countries, the level of implementing expedited arbitration as a specific arbitration procedure before Balkan arbitration institutions. In a situation where there is a lack of analysis of the legal framework and application of expedited arbitration in the Balkans, the analysis of institutional legal framework of arbitration institutions is the basis for further conclusion on the shortcomings and recommendations for improving the application of expedited arbitration procedures.

A comparative and qualitative content analysis was made on the Arbitration Rules of: the Permanent court of Arbitration attached to the Economic Chamber of North Macedonia (PCA–ECNM), the Permanent Arbitration at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia (PA Serbia), Arbitration Court of the Foreign Trade Chamber of Bosnia And Herzegovina (Arbitration court of FTCBH), the Permanent arbitration court of the Croatian Chamber of Economy (CCE Permanent Arbitration Court**)**, Ljubljana Arbitration Centre at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (Ljubljana Arbitration Centre at the CCIS), Arbitration Court at the Chamber of Economy of Montenegro (Arbitration Court at the PKCG) and ADR center of American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo (ADR Center – AmCham Kosovo).

The results of the research confirm that all analyzed arbitration institutions have adopted a section or article(s) about expedited arbitration, except the PCA–ECNM. Based on the results, the author proposes recommendations to enhance the level of use of expedited arbitration as a more efficient way in resolving disputes.

Keywords: Balkan arbitration institutions, fast-track arbitration, efficiency, arbitration rules.

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1. Introduction

Arbitration as a well-known method for resolving disputes, initially was developed as an efficient and flexible form of dispute resolution, especially for international commercial disputes. Compared with court proceedings, arbitration was considered as faster, more flexible, cheaper, confidential, easier to enforce than judicial decisions. The fact that the arbitration is usually a single-stage procedure, the submission procedure is simplified, and often arbitration institutions specify in their rules the maximum duration of the period within the procedure must be completed, contributes for arbitration to be more decisional efficient (Knezevič &

Pavič, 2009). But, unfortunately, some shortcomings and disadvantages in arbitration proceedings have appeared. Commonly cited shortcomings of arbitration very often highlighted by the corporate world, legal practitioners and academia, is that arbitration has become more costly than other methods of dispute resolution and that the arbitration often took longer than the available alternative. Some authors consider that arbitration in international disputes is more expensive than court litigation (Redfern & Hunter, 2004). The commitment to prevent unnecessary delay and cost while ensuring a fair and efficient procedure for resolving the parties' dispute, has become declarative rather than the objective commitment of the arbitration. In the survey conducted by School of International Arbitration of Queen Mary, University of London & White & Case in 2018, according to the respondents, the major worst characteristic of international arbitration is "*cost*" and forth worst characteristics of international arbitration is "*lack of speed"*. Unfortunately, the level of discontent with the "*cost*" of arbitration was evident in previous surveys conducted by the School of international arbitration dating as far back as 2006 (Ibid).

In response to these concerns, some alterations in the arbitration procedures were implemented by renewed arbitration centers aimed at improving efficiency and reducing costs. Expedited arbitration, as a type of arbitration, is characterized by a shortened timeframe and reduced costs, unlike regular arbitration proceedings. Expedited arbitration is a time-compressed procedure and some of the phases of the arbitration procedure are not part of the expedited arbitration procedure at all, while shorter deadlines for undertaking procedural actions are provided for the remaining phases. It is important to stress that expedited arbitration is subject to matters regulated by the Rules of the arbitration institutions, not by national law.

Emerging expedited arbitration dates a few decades ago. This process was started by the Geneva Chamber of Commerce when provisions on expedited procedures were introduced in 1992. After that, in the same year the Hong Kong International Arbitration Center (HKIAC) followed this trend by adopting Short Form Arbitration Rules. World Intellectual property organization (WIPO) took a similar approach in 1994 by revising specific provisions of its arbitration rules, and the following year, in 1995, the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce (SCC) launched an independent set of expedited rules (Wehowsky, 2023). International chamber of commerce (ICC) and London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA) followed this trend by developing expedited arbitration rules in 1998. One of the first cases resolved under this expedited procedure was ICC No. 10211/AER in 1990, a few years before formally adopting expedited arbitration rules. In this case, a dispute arose between the F1 team and their sponsor, a tobacco company. The matter was addressed over the Christmas–New Year period, with the parties obtaining the final decision on the 31st of January (Voronov, 2024).

As a precondition for use of expedited arbitration rules most common are: agreement of the parties to choose expedited arbitration, the dispute is in the amount limit frame for application of expedited arbitration rules and no exception to the application of expedited procedures; and as a fourth precondition, few arbitration institutions the application of expedited procedure conditions it with a situation of exceptional urgency as an additional criterion (Wehowsky, 2023). There is a clear trend toward expanding the use of expedited

rules: some arbitration institutions are raising the monetary threshold—the traditional criterion for applying them (like HKIAC from US $250,000 to HK $25,000,000 (over US $3 million), ICC from US$2,000,000 to US$3,000,000 after 1 January 2021); The fact that the monetary value of a dispute does not always align with how complex it is, may be the one of the reasons why the monetary threshold have been omitted.

For instance, some of the arbitration institutions do not link the application of expedited arbitration with an amount of the disputes, and only the willingness and the agreement of the parties for choosing expedited arbitration have become the most important condition for allowance of expedited arbitration. For example, the ICC Expedited Procedure Provisions also apply regardless of the amount of the dispute as long as the parties mutually agreed to opt in. This extensive approach makes expedited arbitration suitable for a broad range of disputes, regardless of their value.

According to a 2025 survey, when participants were allowed to choose up to three options out of twelve, the mechanisms viewed as most effective in improving efficiency were expedited arbitration procedures and early determination procedures (49%) (School of International Arbitration of Queen Mary, University of London & White & Case, 2025).

Often expedited arbitration is so-called (re)discovery of the traditional advantages of the arbitral process (Dautaj, 2024). As defined by United Nation Commission on International Trade -UNCITRAL (2021), expedited arbitration is a simplified process operating on an accelerated schedule, designed to help parties resolve disputes efficiently in terms of both time and cost. Unlike standard arbitration, expedited proceedings are a specialized procedure that modifies certain procedural rules to make the process faster and simpler (UNCITRL, 2021).

Based on the results of WIPO's[2] survey (2013), respondents reported that typical arbitration lasts slightly more than a year, whereas arbitration under expedited rules averages about nine months; on the cost front, the average price for arbitration was cited as between USD 400,000 and USD 425,000, and 54% of those surveyed said that expedited arbitration generally does not exceed USD 50,000 (WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center, 2013). The results show that there is a considerable difference in the cost and time consumed by traditional arbitration and expedited arbitration procedure.

On the other hand, the situation with overburdening courts in Western Balkan countries, low public trust in the judicial system, judicial procedures that take too long and getting too complicated give a positive signal for using alternative methods for resolving disputes. According to OECD (2020), first-instance courts for civil and commercial disputes in litigation recorded the longest disposition time in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where resolving a case took an average of 574 days, and the average duration for resolving such cases has increased since 2012 in Montenegro (by 13 days), North Macedonia (by 48 days), and Serbia (by 73 days). On other hand the negative perception of the fairness and justice of the judiciary system as a

[2] The survey was completed by 393 participants from 62 countries, active in different sectors related to technology transactions.

threat to the right of just and fair trial may be seen as potential for growing application of arbitration. In this manner National Survey of North Macedonia conducted by International republican institute IRI (2023) shows that only 1% of the respondents trust to a large extent in courts (judiciary system). Another survey conducted in 2022 in Republic of North Macedonia, shows that more than two-thirds of respondents (68.5%) do not believe that the laws and justice system in North Macedonia are just and fair, with only 3,2% expressing fully trust that will receive a fair trial in court proceedings (Kocevski and Gramatikov, 2023). All above-mentioned may be interpreted that arbitration, as an alternative of judicial resolution of disputes, may have great potential for development and application in Western Balkan countries.

The process of development of arbitration, including some comparative aspects in the Western Balkan countries, have been a subject of few research, the latest of Meskic in 2025, but analysis of expedited arbitration are missing. Given the lack of research examining expedited arbitration as a variant of traditional arbitration in the Balkans, the main aim of this paper is to analyze the status of expedited arbitration in the Balkan countries and assess the extent to which this specialized procedure is implemented by local arbitration institutions. Examining the rules of these institutions provides a foundation for identifying gaps and offering recommendations to enhance the use of expedited arbitration procedures.

2. `Methodology

This study represents a normative legal research approach. The author made a comprehensive analysis of the arbitration rules and other arbitration acts, in order to deepen our understanding of how expedited arbitration is applied, as an accelerated arbitration procedure.

The main data are primary legal sources. Analysis of the characteristics of expedited arbitration, was based on qualitative analysis of the Arbitration rules of some renowned arbitration institutions. These characteristics were supported with an example from the regulation of some renewed arbitration institutions like: Singapore arbitration center (SIAC), WIPO, ICC, American Arbitration Association (AAA), HKIAC, German arbitration center (DIS) etc. The section dedicated to expedited arbitration of some Balkan countries' arbitration centers is based on a qualitative analysis on Arbitration rules of the PCA–ECNM, PA Serbia, Arbitration court of FTCBH, CCE Permanent Arbitration Court, Ljubljana Arbitration Centre at the CCIS, ADR Center – AmCham Kosovo.

Method of analysis, comparative method, abstraction, and generalization, facilitated drawing conclusions and recommendations for further development of expedited arbitration.

3. Characteristics of expedited arbitration

The process economy of the expedited procedure is the major benefit of using expedited arbitration procedure. Process economy may be analyzed in two manners, time and cost aspects of it. Results are reached more quickly by shortening both the time for parties to present their arguments and for the tribunal to deliver the award (Smutny, De Lotbinière Mcdougall & Daly, 2020). Fast track arbitration gives a set of procedural possibilities and according them

the elements of fast track arbitration are: strict time limits - especially for the issuance of the award; limitation of procedural steps-restrictions on the number of written submissions as well as limits on conducting a hearing and usage of modern means of communication- email, telephone and video conferences and any other appropriate means of avoiding unnecessary formality (Welser & Klausegger, 2009)

Besides that, very often the expedited arbitration rules are deviating from the ordinary arbitration rules in the following aspects: sole arbitrator instead of three-member tribunal, shorter time limitation of some phases including shortened number and length of submissions, shortened time for rendering the award etc. Expedited arbitration is designed for parties that consider the speed and lower cost of the procedure as an essential, tolerating marginal reductions in legal security. For example, article 41.2 of HKIAC Administered Arbitration Rules, 2013 allows the arbitration tribunal to shorten the time limits provided in the Rules. In principle, each party may only file one Statement of Claim and one Statement of Defence (and Counterclaim), while the tribunal will usually decide the case solely on documentary evidence, unless it determines that holding one or more hearings is justified.

Expedited arbitration proceedings before the WIPO Arbitration and mediation center are conducted before a single arbitrator. The Center recommends a model arbitration clause and a model arbitration compromise for expedited arbitrations to be conducted before the Center. Expedited arbitration is particularly appropriate where the value of the dispute does not justify the initiation of regular court proceedings or arbitration proceedings, where the parties require a final and enforceable decision within a short period of time on a limited number of disputed issues.

The concentration of material evidence and proceedings is one of the basic postulates of expedited arbitration. In expedited arbitration proceedings, it is almost impossible to exchange voluminous submissions, hold long hearings and pay attention to less important arguments. For example, AAA Commercial Arbitration Rules and Mediation Procedures stipulates the rule that the hearing shall not exceed one day, and the exemption for good cause, an additional day. This leads both arbitrators and parties to proceedings to think precisely, concisely, to specify their arguments, to focus on what is really important, without diluting and expanding the proceedings in an unnecessary and unproductive direction. In accordance with WIPO Expedited Arbitration Rules, the tribunal should be committed to resolve the arbitration quickly: the hearing should be held, and the proceedings concluded, within three months after either the Statement of Defence is filed or the Tribunal is constituted (whichever comes later), and the final award should be rendered within one month thereafter (Art.58, WIPO Expedited Arbitration Rules).

The time needed for reasoning and writing the award is precious. Some studies in arbitration practice suggest that arbitration awards are increasingly becoming very lengthy and voluminous. Dasser & Igbokwe in their research about the length of arbitration award reveals that the median length of arbitration awards published in the International Arbitration Database (arbitration.org, mostly ICSID cases) was approximately 45 pages in investment arbitration in the period 1988-1999, and in the time period from 2006-2017 the median length of the

arbitration award have been skyrocketing increasing for almost four times (the median number of pages was about 169 pages) (Dasser & Igbokwe, 2019). According to Kaplan, the long awards show off how clever the drafter is and intending to be PhD theses are unnecessary and add further delay and expenses to the procedures (2019).

Some arbitration institutions, to stay within the time limitation, allow the arbitration tribunal to render an award without reasoning, as a rule without a parties' agreement or as exemption with a parties' consent. The German Arbitration Institute (DIS) has specific solutions for an arbitration award; the tribunal is allowed to omit a factual summary in its award, since drafting such a summary can be time-consuming. The parties are free to agree otherwise.[3] Under the SCC (Stockholm Chamber of Commerce) Expanded (Expedited) Arbitration Rules, the arbitral tribunal is not required to give reasons in its award, unless a party requests a reasoned award no later than during its closing statement.[4] However, such "abbreviated" decisions of arbitration courts have a greater risk of being subject to annulment proceedings. Therefore, the accepted solution of WIPO, according to which only in exceptional cases is it permissible for a decision not to contain reasoning, can be considered the most correct.

However, for the purpose of completing the proceedings within the prescribed time limit, the arbitral tribunal must not be in contrary with the right of equality and the right of each of the parties to have a fair opportunity to present their case, facts and evidence before the arbitral tribunal.

The process of economics very often is represented by conducting the process before a single arbitrator. In most arbitration institutions this is the rule. An exception is the Ljubljana Arbitration Rules, where, as an exception due to the complexity of the dispute and if so agreed by the parties to the proceedings, expedited arbitration, instead of being conducted before a single arbitrator, is conducted before an arbitration court composed of three arbitrators. HKIAC's rules specify that, under the expedited procedure, the default is typically the appointment of a sole arbitrator, unless the parties' agreement clearly stipulates a panel of three.

Another advantage of expedited arbitration is that it is not usually necessary to issue interim measures in this procedure. By definition, the decision in expedited arbitration needs to be made within a short period of time, which is also a feature of decisions on interim measures. From the practice, most final awards have been rendered in a time frame of three to six months after case management conference or after referring the case to an arbitrator (Hinrichsen, Shahrokhi and Cronje, 2024).

[3] Section 7, DIS-Supplementary Rules for Expedited Proceedings 08 (SREP), Annex to the DIS-Arbitration Rules 1998 (in force as of April 2008)

[4] Art.35 (1) Rules for Expedited Arbitrations 2010, Arbitration Institute of the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce.

An advantage of the expedited arbitration procedure, compared with arbitration, is that it is cheaper. The expedited arbitration involves fewer submissions, fewer hearings for the hearing of the parties, witnesses and other participants in the procedure, short time limits for action, etc., which contributes to reducing the costs that the parties would have personally, as well as towards their attorneys. The lower costs of the expedited arbitration procedure are also due to the fact that the arbitration institutions prescribe lower administration costs and lower fees for the arbitrators. Very often in the Tariffs and Schedules of Fees and costs of an arbitration institution, costs including administration fees, registration fee and arbitrator fee for expedited arbitration are lower compared to traditional arbitration.

In this manner, the principle of economy, cost and time efficiency of the procedure have been shown in its full potential.

The process economy of expedited arbitration compared with mediation, expert determination, court litigation -home jurisdiction, court litigation - foreign litigation, arbitration and expedite arbitration based on time and cost of each of analyzed procedures, according the results of International Survey on Dispute Resolution in Technology Transactions are shown in Figure 1 (WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center, 2013).

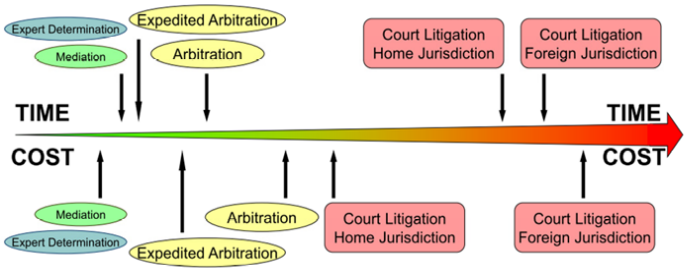

Figure 1: Time and cost for resolving disputes through court litigation, mediation, arbitration, expedited arbitration, expert determination

Source: WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center, 2013

Unfortunately, expedited procedures are not appropriate for every type of dispute. For instance, multi-party arbitrations or complicated cases that demand detailed technical evidence, are generally unsuitable for this expedited format. The expedited arbitration procedure is less suitable for resolving complex disputes; it may require extensive evidentiary proceedings, analyses and opinions of experts, as well as multiple hearings for presenting evidence (Tarjuelo, 2017). Some renowned arbitration institutions give the arbitrators a discretion to determine if the expedited arbitration rules are inappropriate to apply regarding the circumstances of the case i.e. when application of the expedited arbitration will undercut due process guarantees (Dautaj 2024). A disadvantage of expedited arbitration is the difficulty

for the parties to find available and well-prepared attorneys and arbitrators for the procedure in such a short period of time. The short period of time for filing the claim and the response to the claim, preparing the evidence, and obtaining appropriate documentation are some of the disadvantages of expedited arbitration. However, this can be overcome if the case is handled by lawyers and attorneys who are well-versed in the facts of the case and the applicable law. In a situation where the parties agree on expedited arbitration in the main agreement, they should always keep in mind that the preparation of evidence and materials should be started even before the initiation of the expedited arbitration (Welser, 2015). According to Blackaby, Partasides, Redfern and Hunter (2009) expedited arbitration is more likely to be conducted in an expedited manner if submitted to institutional arbitration, rather than to *ad hoc* arbitration, and when parties have a common interest in speedy resolution of the dispute. In any case, it would be good for parties to use expedited arbitration only for issues that truly warrant it and that can be resolved by expedited arbitration (Gaillard & Savage 1999).

The most recent survey carried out by Queen Mary University of London in 2025, completed by 2,401 participants, highlights the perceived benefits of the procedure from the viewpoints of private practitioners, arbitrators, and others. It indicates that 42% of respondents have used expedited or other express arbitration processes provided for in the parties' chosen rules. Notably, 84% considered these expedited or other express-type arbitration procedures to be more efficient than standard processes, and 76% stated they would opt to use them again (School of International Arbitration of Queen Mary, University of London & White & Case, 2025). Among the six available options (from which respondents could select up to three), the leading reasons for opting for an expedited procedure were: the desire to reduce costs (65%), the need for a faster resolution (58%), the dispute's low complexity (50%), the amount in dispute (34%), concerns about the counterparty's ability to satisfy an award or potentially dissipate assets (26%), and the wish to avoid disrupting the parties' ongoing relationship (18%) (School of International Arbitration of Queen Mary, University of London & White & Case, 2025). The findings indicate that the top three motivations for selecting an expedited procedure are the desire to reduce costs, the need for a swift resolution, and the relatively low complexity of the dispute.Vice versa expedited arbitration would be suitable when parties are interested in rendering an award in a short time with low costs and when the dispute is less complex. Shortening time for each of the arbitration phases or skipping some of them means a short time frame for preparing the writings, proofs and other documents necessary for each of the dispute parties. The representatives and the attorneys have to accelerate and to increase their preparation efforts to be in line with case time management. In cases where the documentation is complex and not immediately obtainable, when an expert opinion is necessary, when all the necessary evidence cannot be provided on time, the fast-track arbitration is not suitable (Welser, 2015). In this manner Born (2021) concludes faster resolution can be pursued by using a fast-track arbitration clause or by carefully choosing arbitrators and planning procedure, but there are practical limits to how swiftly a major commercial arbitration can be handled with reliability.

The statistics caseloads from some renowned arbitration centers show an increasing trend of applications under the expedited procedures. For example, from 625 new cases

submitted in SCIAK, 143 applications were recorded under the Expedited Procedure, that is the highest number of applications ever received since the procedure was introduced (SCIAK, 2025). In 2024, 831 cases were administered under the ICC Arbitration Rules, 152 cases were administered under the ICC's Expedited procedure provisions, 147 by direct application of these rules and only 5 cases were opted into by agreement of the parties ("opt-in"). Summarized, since 2017, 461 final awards were issued by application of EPP (ICC Dispute Resolution 2024 Statistics). Out of 811 international cases filed in 2024 in ICD as the international division of the AAA, 172 cases were conducted utilizing the expedited arbitration procedure (American Arbitration Association, 2025). Hinrichsen, Shahrokhi and Cronje (2024) in their research came to conclusion that expedited arbitration cases constituted approximately third of the overall caseload of ICC, SCC, JCAA (Japan Commercial Arbitration Association) and SAC (Swiss Arbitration Centre).

4. Expedited arbitration in some Balkan countries

The emerging trend of regulating expedited arbitration as a form of arbitration procedure, has become evident in the region of Western Balkan countries. Expedited arbitration is examined through a qualitative analysis of the rules of arbitration procedure in the Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro and Kosovo.

Table 1. **Expedited arbitration in some Balkan countries**

Country and arbitration institution	**Arbitration rules**	**Expedited arbitration rules**	**Value of the subject matter of the dispute**
Republic of North Macedonia, PCA–ECNM	Arbitration rules of the PCA–ECNM (Skopje arbitration rules) adopted on 29.04.2021	No special expedited arbitration rules neither provision about expedited arbitration	/
Serbia, PA Serbia	The rules of the PA Serbia adopted on 8th December, 2016	No special expedited arbitration rules, but chapter VIII of the rules is dedicated on expedited arbitration procedure	a) the amount in dispute is less than EUR 50,000 or its countervalue in RSD, unless parties agreed otherwise b) parties explicitly agree, regardless of value
Bosnia and Herzegovina, Arbitration court of FTCBH	Book of rules on the proceedings before the Arbitron court of FTCBH (Sarajevo rules), adopted on 18 March 2025	No special expedited arbitration rules, but chapter X of the rules is dedicated to - special rules of fast-track arbitration procedure	a) In domestic disputes if value does not exceed BAM 100 000,00 (aprox. 51.000 EUR) unless parties agreed otherwise b) In domestic disputes if the value of the subject matter exceeds BAM 100 000, (aprox.

			51.000 EUR) and international disputes (regardless the value) if the parties opted in the application of expedited arbitration procedure
Croatia, CCE Permanent Arbitration Court	Rules of arbitration of the CCE Permanent Arbitration Court (Zagreb Rules) adopted on 19 November 2015	No special expedited arbitration rules, but chapter V. of the rules is dedicated to fast-track arbitration procedure	a)domestic disputes worth up to the HRK equivalent of €100,000,00 b) Domestic disputes above €100,000 and international disputes (regardless the value) if the parties expressly opted in
Slovenia, Ljubljana Arbitration Centre at the CCIS	Arbitration Rules of the Ljubljana Arbitration Centre at the CCIS (the Ljubljana Arbitration Rules) 2023 entered into force on 1 June 2023	No special expedited arbitration rules, but one article in the Rules is dedicated to Expedited Arbitral Proceedings	parties explicitly agree—either in their arbitration agreement or later, regardless of value
Montenegro, Arbitration Court at the PKCG	Arbitration Rules of the Arbitration Court at the PKCG (adopted on November 11, 2015)	No special expedited arbitration rules, but one article in the Rules is dedicated to Expedited Arbitral Proceedings	parties explicitly agree—either in their arbitration agreement or later, regardless of value
Kosovo, ADR Center – AmCham Kosovo	Kosovo Arbitration Rules 2011	No special expedited arbitration rules, but one article in the Rules is dedicated to Expedited Arbitral Proceedings	(a) all cases if the amount in dispute is less than EUR 100,000, unless the arbitration institution determines otherwise after considering all relevant circumstances (b) to all cases, regardless the value, if the parties agree to apply the provisions.

Source: Author's own analysis of arbitration rules

From the analysis of the arbitration rules of all abovementioned arbitration institutions it may be concluded that all analyzed arbitration institutions have adopted a section or article(s) about expedited arbitration, except the PCA–ECNM. None of these arbitration institutions have adopted special expedited arbitration rules, instead they dedicate a section or article(s) in the general arbitration rules.

The Arbitration Court at the PKCG and Ljubljana Arbitration Centre at the Chamber of CCIS accepted application of expedited arbitration procedure, without making a differentiation between disputes with or without international character and regardless of the value of the dispute. The only condition is parties to explicitly agree to the application of expedited

arbitration procedure. CCE Permanent Arbitration Court and Arbitron court of FTCBH are making a distinction between domestic and international disputes. The domestic disputes may be resolved in expedited arbitration procedure if the value of the dispute doesn't exceed some amount presented in the table above. For international disputes and domestic disputes exceeding the estimated amount, the allowance of application of expedited arbitration procedure is related with parties' agreement.

The distinction between disputes with or without international character may be more confusing for the parties in the arbitration procedure. Following the positive examples of renowned arbitration centers, where no distinction is made on this base, this distinction should be annulled. The same treatment of all parties in the disputes, regardless of if they are domestic or foreigners, will bring the parties the same opportunities to use the benefits of expedited arbitration.

Unfortunately, statistics on the number of conducted (expedited) arbitration procedures before the analyzed Balkan arbitration institutions are lacking, and therefore it is not possible to examine the year-by-year application of expedited arbitration in these countries. Based on the scarce, fragmented, and unsystematized data on the number of disputes resolved through arbitration by some institutions in the region and interviews given by officials of some of the arbitrations, it appears that arbitration, and consequently expedited arbitration still has significant untapped potential. Despite overburdened courts and commercial disputes often taking several years to resolve, the number of arbitration cases in arbitrations an Western Balkan remains comparatively low (Meskic, 2025). If the data had been available, the quantitative data would have helped in making conclusions about trends.

5. Conclusion

Dating back three decades ago, expedited or fast-track arbitration has shown on the scene of the world disputes methods as a streamlined and simplified variant of arbitration procedure. The criticisms about inefficiency according to the time and cost occupied for rendering final arbitration award, were motives for altering specific procedural aspects in order to make the arbitral process simpler.

Arbitration institutions have full freedom to create modified arbitration rules, so called fast-track or expedited arbitration rules. Some of the intuitions give a party right to opt in the expedited arbitration rules, some of them are bounding the application of these rules with the value of the disputes, and some of the arbitration institutions have not implemented any provisions for fast-track or expedited arbitration, yet. In the last group of institutions belongs the PCA–ECNM.

It is evident that arbitration institutions are trying to attract as many clients as possible, applications for administering cases by giving them better conditions in manner of more cost and time-efficient procedures.

If the Balkan countries wish to position themselves as attractive arbitration hubs, they should actively promote fast-track arbitration procedures. This requires not only adopting expedited procedures but also showcasing, through successful case examples and transparent practice, the practical benefits of faster and more efficient arbitration.

Bearing in mind that PCA–ECNM is one step backward from the neighboring arbitration centers, it should prioritize the adoption of fast-track arbitration procedure (or articles), in line with the UNCITRAL Expedited Arbitration Rules, which were prepared benefiting from the positive experiences of governments and international organizations.

In a judicial system where the public trust falls to record low levels, like in the Republic of North Macedonia, the potential for further development of (expedited) arbitration is practically unlimited.

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