

EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY AND THE GEORGIAN-ABKHAZ CONFLICT: EUROPEAN UNION'S APPROACH

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Abstract. *The South Caucasus is the region situated at European Union's periphery that shelters challenging frozen conflicts. As a bridge between Europe and Asia, the region becomes relevant to EU's economic and security interests. The Georgian-Abkhaz ethnic conflict is a test-case for the EU's tackling methods especially those that endeavour to over-extend its matrix of cooperation and conditionality over its external borders. EU assumes a degree of responsibility for its neighbourhood through the European Neighbourhood Policy's instruments, offering incentives to both parties of the conflict that are making a difference in the domestic and external dynamic of it. The European institutions perform now political tasks that address the vicinity's complex situation balancing between democratic incentives and the commitments required. There are no EU membership perspectives hitherto for the neighbours but there is a great share in the EU's market and an exclusive opportunity to take part in European programmes.*

Keywords: EU, periphery, European Neighbourhood Policy, frozen conflict, conditionality, Europeanization, partnership, soft power

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