



**Scientific Review of the Latvian Institute of International Affairs publication: *“Dilemmas of Europeanisation: Political Choices and Economic Transformations in the Eastern Partnership Countries”*, LIIA, 2016**

The geo-political as well as domestic- political dynamics in a number of post-Soviet states have changed quite significantly over the last eight years since the EU's Eastern Partnership initiative was conceived in 2008. In addition to internal upheavals of various kind and intensity, two of the six 'Eastern partners' have also experienced full-scale wars as Russia has attempted to reclaim her position as the great power arbiter holding veto right on issues concerning her neighbours' choice of alignment and the model of their socio-economic development. Russian assertiveness, compounded by the EU's own notorious lack of focus and the decrease in the United States' foreign policy activism- all of that combined has truly changed the geopolitical landscape limiting the room for manoeuvre for many of the countries in question. Having said that, it is also quite clear that it would be erroneous to analyse the Eastern partners simply as objects in a classical game of power politics- first of all because the European Union is a reluctant- and poorly equipped- participant in such contests. Therefore this volume's editors' effort to take stock of the current state of affairs of the Eastern Partnership is a highly commendable endeavour, particularly as they have attempted to highlight not only the geopolitical context of the story but also the immensely important dimension of the Eastern partners' 'Europeanisation' understood as a profound and voluntary process of domestic political, economic and social transformation of countries subject to the EU's external action.

The volume starts out with a theoretically grounded discussion of the methods of EU's 'external governance' and the phenomenon of Europeanisation in which Aldis Austers lays out the analytical toolbox necessary to grapple with the issue at hand.

David Cadier then outlines the competing platforms of regional integration – the EU's Eastern Partnership and the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union. While paying due attention to this structural context, the author also makes the critically important argument that many answers



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about the current state of affairs should be sought at the level of domestic political elites in EaP countries.

Guillaume Van der Loo's chapter then goes into detail analysing the actual legal content of agreements concluded between the three of the most advanced Eastern partner countries and the European Union. While discussing the 'Europeanisation' potential of both political and trade relations, the author also pays due attention to the salient issue of whether the Eastern partners' relations with the EU entail a membership perspective and how does that affect the perspective of Europeanisation.

The volume is then supplemented by accessible and informative reports written by Armenian, Azeri, Belarussian, Georgian, Moldovan and Ukrainian analysts all of whom highlight the immensely varied levels of their countries' connection with the EU and the degree of their Europeanisation.

The book concludes with a useful ranking of the Eastern partner countries' degree of Europeanisation.

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