

The EU's Eastern Partnership: normative or geopolitical power projection?

Kamala VALIYEVA*

Abstract

This paper examines the European Union's Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiative through the lens of theoretical debate between constructivist and rationalist approaches with a specific focus on the normative and geopolitical dimensions of the EU's power projection in a specific region. In doing so the paper aims to determine whether the initiative is a pursuit of the EU's interests in the post-Soviet area and an attempt to weaken Russia's traditional great power potential in the region or a policy to enhance regional stability through the promotion of fundamental European values which serves as a framework for democratic institution-building in partner countries. This paper argues that the EU's ambivalent actorness in this particular post-Soviet region, which is shaped both by value considerations and self-interest concerns, while lacking a strategic coherence, constitutes a fundamental reason behind a policy failure.

Keywords: European Union, normative power, geopolitical power, Eastern Partnership, value-based transformation, post-Soviet countries

* Kamala VALIYEVA is PhD candidate at Gazi University, Ankara, Turkey; e-mail: kavaliyeva@gmail.com.