

Van Elsuwege, P. and Petrov, R. (eds.): *Legislative Approximation and Application of EU Law in the Eastern Neighbourhood of the European Union*, London and New York: Routledge Press, 2014, 268 p. ISBN: 978-0-415-64043-5.

This new publication edited by two leading authors in the field of the EU external Relations law — Peter Van Elsuwege and Roman Petrov, is dedicated to the related issues of the Eastern Neighbourhood policy. Especially, it is focusing on the analysis of the legal aspects of the EU's relations with the Eastern partnership countries, including the approximation of laws and other methods of the “acquis export”. The book is published by the renowned Routledge in London and New York in 2014. To the great advantages of the publication belongs the fact, that it deals with two areas which are not still sufficiently analyzed in the scientific literature: legislative approximation and application of EU law beyond the EU borders. To the second advantage of the book belongs the reflection of the diversity of the approaches and the analysis done from the various perspectives – from the point of view of the Member states as well as the states of the Eastern partnership as the authors team involves the researchers from these countries.

The book is a welcome contribution to literature on EU external relations law and other persons who are interested in EU law.

In general it deals with the phenomenon of application of EU law beyond the EU borders. In particular, the book focuses on two dimensions of this process. First, it analyses the legal and institutional foundations of this extraterritorial application of EU law in third countries. Second, it analyses the results of legal approximation and regulatory convergence with regard to the EU's eastern neighbours (the countries of the Eastern Partnership and Russia). The choice of this region as a case study is justified by the fact that the relevant countries do not have a perspective of full EU membership. However, the EU policy towards the Eastern Partnership countries and Russia encourages these countries to voluntarily harmonise their legislation with the EU *acquis*. Results of this research are relevant for studying the effectiveness of present and future EU external regional policies aimed at the promotion of EU common values and EU legislation into the legal orders of third countries.

The book is well structured and logically comprehensive. The study is divided into two parts. Part 1 deals with an overview of the instruments and mechanisms of the process of legislative approximation and application of EU law beyond the EU borders. Christophe Hillion looks at anatomy of EU norm export towards the EU's neighborhood. Aaron Matta differentiates the methods of *acquis export*. Dimitry Kochenov deliberates about the scope and role of the

EU common values in the domain of the EU external policy. Guillaume Van Der Loo analyses the EU-Ukraine deep and comprehensive free trade area as an example of a coherent mechanism for legislative approximation. Sieglinde Gstoel writes about the prospects of a Neighborhood Economic Community between the EU and its Eastern partners. Adam Lazowski and Steven Blockmans focus on the challenges to the legal rapprochement of the Western Balkans and the EU.

Part 2 offers a comprehensive study of the experience of legislative approximation and application of EU law in the EU's neighborhood. Part 2 contains detailed country reports from Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Russia. Contributors of Part 2 (Roman Petrov, Anna Khvorosiankina, Gaga Gabrichidze, Narine Ghazaryan, Anna Hakobyan, Maksim Karliuk and Paul Kalinichenko) provide in depth analysis of direct and indirect application of EU law in legal systems of their countries. Country reporters study the link between the approximation efforts and the application of EU law by national executive and judiciary. Country reporters from Belarus and Russia (Maksim Karliuk and Paul Kalinichenko) put forward the concept of "back door harmonization" that is inherent to the East European countries which are not willing closer rapprochement with the EU. In concluding remarks Peter Van Elsuwege and Roman Petrov argue that in the absence of any explicit membership perspectives legislative approximation between the EU and the East European countries does not aim at the full incorporation of the entire EU acquis. In practice the East European countries 'gradually but surely develop a new model of 'integration without membership', which is based on the application of sectoral EU acquis and legislative approximation aiming at economic integration through the establishment of bilateral Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas.

In conclusion, the book is a well researched source of information on EU external relations and promotion of the EU acquis into legal systems of the EU's eastern neighbors, as it brings a deep analysis of high quality made in the field, which creates a key element of the External relations law of the Union. That is why the publication is very welcomed and can be strongly recommended for specialists in EU law, political scientists and other persons, who are interested in External relations law of the EU.

Naděžda Šišková
Head of the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence in EU Law
at Faculty of Law, Palacký University in Olomouc
President of the Czech Association for European Studies
nadezda.siskova@upol.cz