
KERIKMÄE, Tanel and CHOCHIA, Archil (eds.). *Political and Legal Perspectives of the EU Eastern Partnership Policy*. Cham: Springer International Publishing AG, 2016, 279 p. ISBN 978-3-319-27383-9.

Estonian colleagues from the Tallinn Law School at the Tallinn University of Technology presented unique collection of works written by international renowned authors who offers detailed insight into various areas within EU Eastern Partnership (EaP). It is not surprising that this important achievement has been developed under the leadership of prof. Tanel Kerikmäe, an internationally recognized expert in the field of European integration studies and co-edited by Archil Chochia, a rising star among Estonian researchers in European studies. Together with other authors they offer in total 17 contributions representing case studies within relevant EaP policies or the attitude of EaP non-EU partners to various issues.

Their contribution is important for at least two reasons. First, once EaP was launched under the umbrella of EU neighbourhood policy it provoked more disappointment than encouragement on the side of eastern partners. The reason is that so far until EaP the EU Neighbourhood Policy (NEP) was driven by the prospect of enlargement and EaP invoked feeling that EU is offering an alternative without future prospect of EU membership. The initiative to create “ring of friends” at the EU borders in the form of EaP was not fully understood and resulted in doubts on the side of EU partners and provoked cautious approach of Russia. In relation to this reason presented volume offers some kind of correction and deeper insight helping to understand EaP as a framework for activities and its impact on various areas of cooperation.

Second, at the time when volume was published EaP was operating already for 6 years which from the perspective of policy life cycle is enough to allow relevant evaluation of its effectiveness, impacts, successes and failures which may help to deeper understanding of the policy and lead to adjustments within policy settings. This is especially important due to increasing divergence among EaP members (not only EaP non EU partners but also within the EU itself) and changes of the continuously developing environment in which EaP operates,

especially in relation to the war in Ukraine and tensions with Russia. The evaluation and possible adjustment of the policy will be important to increase EaP effectiveness and strengthen the stability in the EU neighbourhood as almost all authors of the volume concludes, there are significant limits within EaP.

Very beneficial interpretative contribution on the limited outcomes of Eastern Partnership Programme (EPP) has been provided by Vlad Bernygora, David Ramiro Troitiño and Sigrid Västra who claims that limits of EPP are inherently given and comes out from the clash between functional nature of EPP and EU's aspiration to build political empire. This clash cause frequent revisions and results in criticism as the EU is hesitant to recognise its imperial stance on one hand but has greater aspirations than just being functionally driven entity, which has implications for relations with other actors (p. 19). Despite initial scepticism authors believes that EU will play important role in redefinition of the systemic design of EPP vis-à-vis new challenges. Their theoretically interpretative study stimulates the debate about the ability of *sui generis* entity to cultivate relations with its neighbours and opens new view which might be in the further research challenged for example by constructivist approach of the international relations theory.

The emphasis on better understanding "what is EU" is visible also in the second contribution written by Tatjana Muravska and Alexandre Berlin who discuss benefits of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements for shared prosperity and security from the political economy perspective. Authors claim that ENP has become inevitably important especially due to change in the borders of the EU and establishment of the Euroasian Economic Union. From the contribution is evident emphasis on the civil society which plays critical role for understanding conditionality, reform process and mutual benefits of cooperation (p. 35). They also stress that EU shall treat EPP partners as equal which again raises questions about EU perception as an actor which may sometimes act as supranational entity and contribute to misunderstandings.

The non-Estonian reader will be probably surprised that three contributions in the volume deal with ICT, e-governance and digital agenda in general. Due to increasing importance of the agenda and pioneering role of Estonia in this issue presented contributions offers unique insight to the issue. For example Olga Batura and Tatjana Evas identified several stages leading to development of the ICT within EaP and describe process how ICT becomes mainstream policy area in the increasing number of EaP domains. However, despite great progress the development within the EaP regarding ICT does not match the scope, depth and intensity of the Digital Single Market strategy of the EU member states (p. 54) This is something which is stressed also by Yuri Misnikov in his contribution dedicated to democratisation. Misnikov asks whether the democratization potential of the ICTs is taken into the count and leads to greater democracy among EaP

partners (p. 59). His findings are not very positive as current scope of democratization programme is rather based on traditional tools (human rights, rule of law, civil society) and does not benefit from “digital democracy” despite Association Agreement urges for deeper democratization. His contribution thus reveals space for new tools incorporation and further research in relation to e-democracy.

Similar limits may be found also in the contribution dedicated to e-governance presented by Katrin Nyman-Metcalf and Taras Repytskyi. Both authors assessed Estonian role in helping Moldova and Ukraine to develop e-governance. However, authors stress that due to background similarities based on post-Soviet experience e-governance had so far limited results due to concentration on technical side while avoiding incentives improving democratic participation or better governance (p. 97). Contribution helps to understand further limits in cooperation among EaP members derived from different perception, popularity and sometimes patchy process.

The edited volume focuses also on other specific issues within EaP. For example Kristi Joaments deals with Family Law within Eastern Partnership. She introduced European Family Law within Concept of Culture and then assessed “family life” and “marriage” in the EaP in order to reveal whether EaP states are progressive and incorporates EU features into national legal systems or are rather of the conservative attitude. Her study shows that the second approach is more relevant and EaP partners in Ukraine or Moldova are very slow in accepting legally gender-based and gender-neutral cohabitation and marriage and problems related to gender equality remains. Moreover, in some areas old traditions preserves and national law in respect to family and marriage is outdated (p. 114). In this sense we can claim, that EaP represents the driver for modernity and change which meets resistance caused by predominantly cultural difference.

Very important and one of the most problematic issues within EaP is that of migration. Despite cooperation in this area slowly develops there are substantial problems which are assessed by Lehte Roots. The author stress that Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova are countries of origin, destination and transit which has some implications for migration regime. At the same time EU follows the attitude of stabilizing situations in these countries without evident prospect of future membership which may lead to disappointment (p. 119) and reduce the incentive to proceed with reform. Author stress that EaP countries are bound by the Copenhagen criteria, which shall be implemented also in the approaches related to immigration policy, but still, without prospect of future membership the motivation is weak. However, there are issues also at the side of the EU as migration and asylum policy is linked not only to justice, security and home affairs but has important extension to neighbourhood. Too many dimensions and actors involved means that EU often fails to speak with one voice (p. 134). The contribution of

Lehte Roots helps to understand the complexity of the migration policy from the both sides of the EU border.

Slightly similar approach to different area has been presented by Hamad Alavi who assessed EU's initiatives promoting environmental standards in the third countries under the umbrella of EaP and especially the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. Despite slight structural fragmentation of the chapter the author offers comprehensive view within issues and challenges ahead. As pointed out, this means to continue with emphasis of higher level of environmental protection, improving environmental governance and especially capacity building which is key factor influencing effective implementation of environmental policies and smooth approximation process (p. 150). Despite some shortcomings we can claim, that environmental cooperation is one of the areas with greatest and most visible added value within cooperation and represent good example how EU may utilize its "soft power" as environmental leader.

Very interesting chapter written by Roman Petrov is dedicated to the implementation of Association Agreements between EU and three states: Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. Petrov focuses mainly on legal and constitutional constraints and concentrates on two major challenges within the implementation process: how to ensure effective implementation and application of the Association Agreements and how to solve potential conflicts between Association Agreements and national constitutions. Author is relatively positive about future legal development of these countries and believes that Association Agreements may trigger important reforms and serve as stimulus for higher legislative quality due to external monitoring from the side of the EU institutions (p. 164). Yet, as author points out, there is long journey for these countries to create implementation laws which might be modelled on the experience of other countries which had to join the EU, undertake constitutional review and create conditions for Constitutional Courts to rule about the relation between EU and national law.

Another three contributions deal with Ukraine. Evhen Tsybulenko and Serjey Pakhomenko writes about Ukrainian Crises and its implications for the EaP within the wider context: they focus on the expectations of the actors, the Russian factors and the future prospect to reform EaP. Authors stress that EaP is evaluated primarily in geopolitical terms. In this sense author touch the clash between functional nature of EaP and Imperial paradigm of the EU discussed already in the first chapter. Authors claim that Ukraine had unjustified expectations from the EaP and better shall understand the cooperation "as an additional opportunity to enhance the process of internal reforms in line with Europeanization" (p. 178). In other words crises in Ukraine highlighted the limits of the EU capabilities to shape future relations and discovered unrealistic expectations of the Ukraine which remains in the shadow of Russia. Despite this contribution offers somehow

“standard” interpretational of EU-Ukraine-Russia relations it has its important place within the volume as it helps to understand geo-political limitations of the EaP and thus the grounds for re-formulation of the initiative.

Another interesting perspective is offered by Thomas Hoffmann who analysed the level of Europeanization in the area of private law in Ukraine. Hoffmann offered ten very typical situations in the field of law of obligations and compared how the situation would be solved according to Ukrainian law and from European continental perspective. His exploratory contribution finds out that Ukrainian law is to the greater degree Europeanized, however with considerable exceptions (p. 196). This has implications for contractual law, consumer protection, liability for damages and other areas important for ever closer economic relations with the EU.

After Ukraine three contributions are devoted to Georgia a country in the Russia’s closest neighbourhood which opted for pro-European future. Archil Chochia and Hohanna Popjanevski discuss political development in the country and its consequences for the Georgia-EU relations. The study discovers increasing tensions within Georgian society caused by the rise of anti-Western forces invoked by Europeanization and fuelled by Russia directly by infiltration or by providing alternative in Eurasian Economic Union (p. 207). However, similarly to Ukraine Georgian commitment is also weakened by the hesitant attitude of the EU Member States which tries to avoid problems similar to development in Ukraine. Due to long way towards full EU membership second contribution written by Dali Gabelaia discuss Georgian experience with Visa Liberalization Action Plans which also required implementation of anti-discrimination and personal data protection laws. Despite great progress within implementation and changes Gabelaia concludes that every small success leads to inflated expectations which might be exploited by anti-EU forces as discussed by Chochia and Popjanevski.

The third contribution about Georgia analyses self-regulation mechanism in the Georgian medial landscape. Mamuka Andguladze discovers relatively important deficiencies in establishing effective self-regulatory bodies to guarantee professionalism and independence of Georgian media and discusses vulnerabilities and differences in comparison to European regulatory standard (p. 236-240). With medial landscape deals also contribution of Onoriu Colăcel who concentrates on Moldovan private JurnalTV Chanel in the context of ethnic and cultural background or better between Romanian and Russian speaking medial culture (p. 247). Despite his contribution is shorter than others and lacks explicit conclusion it represents unique probe into Moldovan medial landscape and the issue of country position between Russia and the West.

The last contribution of the volume provides insight into area of innovation and possibilities in Baltic-Russia cooperation. Eunice Omolola Olaniyi and Gunnar Klaus Prause provides complex understanding of the activities leading

to regional development and innovation in the Baltic countries and present EU-Russian platform for cooperation including analysis of the similarities and differences within each country. Their contribution has added value especially in addressing policy considerations for innovation opportunities (p. 273-276). This is important as many Central and Eastern European economies share similar environment to that of Baltic countries and policy considerations may help them to increase attractiveness and incentives leading to innovations.

The presented volume offers unique insight in various areas of EaP and represents evidence that EaP has impacts beyond its formal scope. Great variability of contributions and thus partial inconsistency is well compensated by logical placement of individual contributions. Despite almost all contributions have conclusions reader might miss some final conclusion of the volume discussing prospects of the future cooperation and proposals for EaP modifications or highlight of new lines for further research. Most of the contributions are very empirical or interpretative in nature which may leave impression that theoretical potential of some contributions was not fully filled.

Despite several contributions deals with the concept of Europeanization there is no feedback for the concept. However, this was not the aim of the issue which represents very important contribution evaluating EaP and fills the gap among other leading book titles. Nevertheless, readers might have feeling that volume lacks contributions dealing with Russian perspective and label the volume as “Western” or “EU-centric” which is inherently given by the topics and the researcher’s attitude. In fact the book perfectly develops previous works of Elena Korosteleva dealing with EaP, Anna-Sophie Maass who writes about EU-Russian Relations or Roger E. Kanet’s volume about Russian foreign policy.¹ For this reasons publication will be appreciated not only by students and academia in general, but also by decision-makers, journalists, security experts or anyone searching for deepening the knowledge about EU’s eastern neighbourhood.

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¹ KOROSTELEVA, Elena. *The European Union and its Eastern Neighbours. Towards a More Ambitious Partnership?* New York: Routledge, 2014, 228 pp. ISBN 978-0-415-61261-6; MAASS, Sophie-Anna. *EU-Russia Relations, 1999–2015: From Courtship to Confrontation*. New York: Routledge, 2016, 216 pp. ISBN: 113894369X.; KANED, Roger E. (ed). *Russian Foreign Policy in the 21st Century*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2011, 289 pp. ISBN: 978-0-230-29316-8