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## **The Promotion of the EU's equality and non-discrimination values through the European Neighbourhood Policy**

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**Abstract:** *The aim of this article is to discuss the position of equality and non-discrimination values in the domain of EU external relations. The article looks at the role of these values in defining the EU's identity in its external policies and uses the European Neighbourhood Policy as an example. It is argued that the notion 'equality' is used by the EU and the neighbour countries in different ways, which highlights their abstract nature. It is concluded that the ENP is based on conflicting values, such as respect for human rights and equality, which neighbour countries try to solve on their own way. A conditionality policy intensively employed by the EU doesn't meet the expectations of neighbour countries and polarizing society due to deepening the conflict of values.*

Europeanization as a global trend is one of the consequences of the EU's external activities. The EU's anti-discrimination legislation is widely regarded as the most advanced in the world and an effective one. But to what extent is the EU's equality and non-discrimination policy accepted by third countries? The conceptual focus of this contribution will be upon the linkage of an EU's external policies and actual application of the EU measures to combat discrimination by countries of the Eastern Partnership. This contribution's scope will be clustered around three themes.

First, how does the EU use its equality and non-discrimination policy to achieve objectives of its own external action? Second, what scope of the EU measures to tackle discrimination is being promoted via the UN framework? Third, can the EU approach develop capacity in non-discriminatory behaviour and promote a change in attitudes in the neighbouring countries?

Currently, the EU acquis does not provide any legal distinction between values and principles that the EU is invoking. These values receive their most definitive form in the new version of the Treaty on European Union, wherein art. 2 is emphasised that: "The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail." Previously most of them have been recognized as principles. Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights bans discrimination on differentiated grounds and recognized this term as a principle.

If the European Union, pursuant to the declaration above, is to remain a social, human-oriented project, i.e. a project with an external dimension, neighbour countries always have to be recognised as partners, and not as an instrument to ensure institution building and reform from one side. Common practice, however, runs contrary to the ideals above, as if the sole purpose of the ENP – differentiation, which is based on the successful implementation of the EU's common values by the neighbour countries, while these countries pursue different strategic goals not always compatible with EU perception.