

European Neighbourhood Policy and the Paradoxes of Enlargement

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Abstract: This paper deals with the effect of the Eastern enlargement of the European Union on its new neighbouring countries. It is argued that the EU casts a shadow over its neighbours in the sense that enlargement confronts them with a number of unintended effects which run counter to the founding commitments of the Union. In its relations with its new neighbours, the EU is confronted with two paradoxes : on the one hand integration within the EU makes it harder to involve non-members into European cooperation ; on the other hand the extension of the EU makes it harder for non-members to escape the EU's impact. To mitigate the effects of enlargement, the EU has introduced the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). This article analyses ENP as a structural form of foreign policy, with a differentiated character, a low level of institutionalisation and an EU-centric nature. While ENP officially aims at creating a form of partial integration, its main function may appear to be the creation of a breathing space before further enlargement.

Key words: European Neighbourhood Policy, European Union, enlargement, external governance, structural foreign policy