THE LIMITS OF ENLARGEMENT-LITE: EUROPEAN AND RUSSIAN POWER IN THE TROUBLED NEIGHBOURHOOD

Nicu Popescu & Andrew Wilson
POLICY REPORT

The limits of enlargement-lite: European and Russian power in the troubled neighbourhood

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Summary/Abstract: Over the past year, war in Georgia, the Ukrainian gas crisis and the burning of the Moldovan parliament have all dominated the front pages of European newspapers. But behind the headlines the story is just as bleak: politics in the “neighbourhood” is a toxic mixture of authoritarianism and stalled democracy, ongoing secessionist tensions continue to stoke fears of violent conflict, and the economic crisis is wreaking havoc throughout the region. The implications for the EU are profound. Renewed hostilities or economic collapse could see an influx of immigrants into eastern Member States. Several banks in western Member States are exposed to the imploding economies in the east. But beyond these immediate dangers, there is an emerging contest between the EU and Russia over the political rules that are to govern the neighbourhood. Since the 2004 Orange revolution in Ukraine, Russia has been working tirelessly to draw the countries of the region into its sphere of influence while the EU has continued to pursue a technocratic strategy best described as “enlargement-lite” – offering the neighbourhood states the prospect of eventual political and
economic alignment with the EU while dampening down any hopes of actual accession.

**Details**

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EU leaders should “stop placing a lazy bet on a strategy of ‘enlargement-lite’ – ignoring that the six countries are deep in the worst political and economic crisis since their independence,” write Popescu and Wilson. “Without the accession carrot, the countries of the Eastern neighbourhood will not naturally gravitate towards the EU, as Brussels policymakers seem all too often to assume,” insist the authors. “It's time for the EU to understand that if they do not help Eastern European states to deal with the crises ravaging the region, Russia will,” they claim. “Distrust and fatigue increasing The Limits of Enlargement-lite: European and Russian Power in the Troubled Neighbourhood Nicu Popescu & Andrew Wilson POLICY REPORT. Page 2 and 3: ABOUT ECFR The European Council on F. Page 6 and 7: Mirzeishvili, Kalman Mizsei, Daniel. Page 8 and 9: The eastern neighbourhood Minsk BELAR. Page 10 and 11: Executive summary The six eastern ne. Page 12 and 13: freedom of action. They are in no h. For this magazine there is no download available. Magazine: euroPeAN AND russian PoWer IN The TroubLed Neighbourhood. Close. ×. Save as template? Title. Description. no error.