

The European Union as Democracy Promoter: the case of Ukraine

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Abstract

This paper examines the effectiveness of the European Union (EU) as a democracy promoter in Ukraine. After examining the evolution of the EU's general external policy relating to democracy, it will be argued that in the case of Ukraine, although the EU contributed significantly to the development of civil society and to solving the political crisis during the presidential election of 2004, there has been much less emphasis on the promotion of democracy by the EU than has been declared. Additionally, the fact that until 2005 Ukraine did not seriously aspire to become integrated into Europe minimized the EU's influence on Ukraine. In 2005 new opportunities appeared for the EU to play a more active and successful role in building a democratic Ukraine. The orange revolution resulted in the election of leadership more committed to common European values, and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the EU-Ukraine action plan created a framework for the EU to be a more active and efficient player in promoting democracy in Ukraine. Still, additional integration incentives beyond the present scope of ENP are needed to allow the EU to have a greater impact on democratic transformation in Ukraine.

Key words: Ukraine, democracy promotion, European Neighborhood Policy, partnership and cooperation