

EU's Differentiated Integration: Internal and External Dimensions

12 November 2018

**Tbilisi Marriott Hotel, Rustaveli Avenue 13
Tbilisi, Georgia**

Since the member states and peoples of the EU are “united in diversity”, it seems natural for the European construction to use patterns of differentiated integration, so as to be able to act in an effective manner while taking this diversity into account. However, the promoters of differentiated integration should focus not only on effectiveness, but also on legitimacy issues, which are key for the EU's functioning and success, at a time when it is confronted by global challenges but also fragmented along several divides between states and peoples. After all, the Euro and Schengen, two of the most striking and visible European achievements, concern only 19 and 22 of the EU member states respectively and could not have been established if a unanimous commitment had been necessary. And in today's Europe, where political heterogeneity seems more acute than ever, having more differentiated integration appears to be an almost natural way forward for the EU. The same is true for the EU's external differentiation. Indeed, the 'Brexit' debate has triggered new interest in the European Union's close economic and political relations with its neighbours.

With this context in mind, the conference aims at discussing the potential benefits and risks of differentiated integration within the EU in an internal and external dimension. The issue is to understand how forms of differentiated integration relate to the disintegrative pressures that have built up in Europe, and the impact it may have on the European Neighbourhood and enlargement policies.

The first panel on internal dimension will focus on the institutional and policy implications resulting from the deepening of the euro zone, the secessionist trends within the EU, and broader trends of renationalization. What are the currently most important forms of differentiated integration? How does the current and possible future deepening of the euro area impact the EU as a whole? How can the UK case potentially impact differentiated integration in the EU? What effects may secessionism trends have on the EU? How might the current trends with the neighbouring and enlargement countries impact the domestic political landscapes within the EU? How does public opinion, and in particular the rise of euroscepticism, impact the nature and degree of integration?

The second panel would then analyse whether a modular approach to integration may facilitate a revamping of the European Eastern Partnership and how this may impact the future of enlargement. To what extent is the EU currently employing a differentiated approach to its enlargement and neighbourhood policies? How might the current internal trends with the EU impact the neighbouring and enlargement countries? Which negative effects are currently underestimated? What are the potential costs and benefits to the EU and its neighbourhood of a more flexible strategy vis-à-vis the Eastern Partnership countries? What should this look like? What is the potential for modular integration for enlargement policy? (Turkey, Balkans, Europe's Eastern neighbourhood)? How can the divisive “membership” question be transformed into a more constructive “integration” question of benefit to all sides?

In 2018 the Georgian government has started to elaborate a European Integration Roadmap aiming at facilitating Georgia's institutional, legislative and physical rapprochement with the EU. The Roadmap envisages greater sectoral integration with the Union and deeper co-operation with the EU programmes and agencies. The aim of this panel will also be to understand how this initiative could foster the process of Georgia's integration into the European Union.

AGENDA

- 12:00 – 13:00** Welcome lunch
13:00 – 13:20 Welcome and Introduction
CARL HARTZELL Ambassador of the European Union to Georgia
FERDINANDO NELLI FEROCI President, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)
- 13:20 – 13:40** Opening remarks
VAKHTANG MAKHAROBLISHVILI Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia
- 13:40 – 14:30** **I Panel: EU's Internal differentiation – trends, problems, potential**
Chair: **FERDINANDO NELLI FEROCI** President, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)
Speakers:
IAIN BEGG Professorial Research Fellow at the European Institute, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)
BARBARA LIPPERT Director of Research, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP)
LOUKAS TSOUKALIS President, Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP)
STEVEN BLOCKMANS Senior Research Fellow & Head of EU Foreign Policy, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)
- 14:30 – 15:30** Open Debate
- 15:30 – 16:00** Coffee Break
- 16:00 – 17:00** **II Panel: EU's External differentiation: Neighbourhood policy and enlargement patterns**
Chair: **MATTEO BONOMI** Research Fellow, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)
Speakers:
TORNIKE SHARASHENIDZE Professor and Head of MA Program in International Affairs at the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA)
GHIA NODIA Professor of Politics and Director of the International School of Caucasus Studies, Ilia Chavchavadze State University
LICINIA SIMAO Assistant Professor at the School of Economics, University of Coimbra
MARIE MENDRAS Professor, Sciences Po University's Paris School of International Affairs, and Research Fellow, National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS)
- 17:00 – 18:00** Open Debate
- 18:00** End of Conference