Bringing Minority Rights Home

The Effective Protection of Minorities in the Enlarged European Union: Possible Goal or just a Myth?

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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses whether the European Union needs to establish a legal framework to protect the rights of national minorities living in its Member States. It focuses mostly on the accession process to the European Union, as minority protection constitutes one of the Copenhagen Political Criteria. This matter is examined trough a case studies of Slovakia, Latvia and Turkey, countries with complicated situations of their minority groups. It shows how strong impact, if any the EU conditionality had within the candidate states regarding minority protection. As it is demonstrated, the European Union has not resolved these problems, largely because the European Union lacks consistent and uniform standards on minority protection. It is argued that as the European Union enlarges further, there is a strong need for consistent and uniform standards of internal and external protection of minority rights. In its conclusion the study proposes several possible alternatives that could help the European Union to ensure consistency of standards in the accession process, as well as resolve remaining issues of minorities internally.

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