

Review of: "The EU's Capacity for Enlargement: Does It Matter?"

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The author considers an important issue in the field of international relations. The European Union has gone through several significant enlargements since the Cold War, but notably in the XXI century, a qualitatively new stage of the EU's development has taken place. The fifth enlargement in 2004 was the largest, followed by the sixth and the seventh enlargements in 2007 and 2013. The Eastern European countries, formerly part of the "socialist camp," turned out to be different from the Western European ones in many respects, namely in terms of economic development, political institutions, self-identifications, and public psychology. In particular, the attitudes towards migrants were significantly different, which led to, starting with the migration crisis of 2015, the EU governance crisis, with the Visegrad Group as a kind of EU opposition, the flourishing of anti-immigrant right-wing parties, and the growth of Eurosceptic sentiments.

The increasing complexity of the EU's structure has led to ideas of multi-speed integration, discussions and splits, lack of consensus, and a crisis of models for further development. Increasing heterogeneity, as the author correctly points out, has its costs. Nevertheless, and this was officially proclaimed, for example, in the speech of the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, at the International Strategic Forum in Slovenia in 2023, the European Union had strong plans to involve 8-10 more members by the year 2030. The author has reasonably pointed out the contradictions between widening and deepening, between size and heterogeneity, and between the EU's ability to enlarge and to reform. And he has also persuasively pointed out that "the analysis was not aimed at developing an operationalisable system for enlargement capability and measuring the current status," understanding the limitations of the intent of the article, and reasonably not intending to go beyond them. All of the above made the presented article a successful contribution to the development of research on the EU's capacity for enlargement.