

# Abstract

The European Union is one of the main actors actively promoting democratic progress in Georgia. It is widely believed that the EU's democracy promotion in Georgia has been inextricably linked to one of its key foreign policy instruments, namely, the democratic conditionality. In recent years, the EU has been able to induce several transformative democratic reforms in Georgia by tying them to big "carrots", such as the signing of the Association Agreement (AA) encompassing the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) and the Visa Liberalisation process. Considering that Georgia had never received an official EU membership perspective when the country achieved this crucial milestone, experts questioned whether the EU could induce transformative democratic changes in this Black Sea region country and how. Specifically, the strategies, instruments or tools that the EU might employ to push essential democratic reforms adoption and implementation became a point of contention. This thesis attempts to address this debate by answering the following research question: How does the EU attempt to induce democratic reforms in Georgia without conditionality in place?

The thesis is based on two case studies within a single case study on Georgia. The first case is related to the EU-promoted anti-discrimination law's adoption and implementation, and the second case study covers the EU-brokered March 8 Agreement encompassing a comprehensive electoral system reform in Georgia. In both cases, the EU appears to play a critical role, albeit through different mechanisms and tools at its disposal. The thesis attempts to provide a reader with a nuanced analysis of the EU's perceived role in the above-mentioned transformative democratic reforms' adoption and implementation in Georgia. The author employs the following qualitative methods for the offered case studies: a qualitative content analysis and in-depth interviews with experts and elites. The

thesis aims to contribute to the scholarly literature on EU-Georgian relations.