

**EU MEMBERSHIP CONDITIONALITY AND DEMOCRATIZATION IN TURKEY:
THE ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY AS A CASE STUDY**

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By
Amichai Magen

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ABSTRACT

Until fairly recently, students of democratic transformation and consolidation have tended to focus overwhelmingly on national, domestic factors and actors. Traditionally, democracy and the rule of law were viewed by political scientists as subject matters where international influences had little or no role. Concomitantly, the word "democracy" was rarely used by international relations theorists and international lawyers. The collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989-1991, and the increased involvement by international organizations in the transition of the Central and Eastern European countries to democracy through the 1990s, has brought to the fore the role of international organizations in domestic political and legal change. Still, the subject is understudied and under-theorized. Generally lacking are systematic studies about the extent and nature of impact by external actors (both global and regional) on domestic structures and norms. The few studies that have begun to examine these issues in any depth, have tended to concentrate on Central and Eastern Europe, and the role played by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe (CE) and, most importantly perhaps, the European Union (EU) in those countries. This thesis explores the role that these regional organizations have had in facilitating legal democratic reforms in Turkey over the last two years. Empirically, the study analyses when and how such external actors have impacted Turkish decision-makers in the area of constitutional and legislative reform. The abolition of the death penalty is examined in depth, as an illustrative case study. Drawing upon official and unofficial documents, a survey of Turkish and foreign media coverage and interviews with Turkish Affairs experts from five different countries, the study identifies some of the conditions under which an international organization is likely to be more effective in achieving compliance with rules and norms it seeks to promote in a given country. In addition, the thesis contributes to the study of democratization, regional integration and governance, by examining the internal policy debate generated as the result of external actor involvement.

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