

SEARCHING FOR IDENTITY: THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN EUROPEAN UNION  
AND ITS EASTERN NEIGHBORS

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**Double identity: Armenia in the crossroads of Europe and Asia**

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Armenia, a unique and ancient culture from one side, and a post-soviet country from the other, suffers very interesting processes of identify formation after the collapse of Soviet Era. Currently nationalism from one side and westernization and globalization tendencies from the other compose the basic components of the national identity. From one side the search of the national spirit, those which was prohibited by Soviets, from the other – search of new tendencies and information that comes from the western countries and especially EU – are expressed not only in the public ethnic discourse, but also in the various aspects of the culture – starting from the mass culture (pop art) and ending up in the problems arisen in the literature.

These tendencies are very interesting when observed from the outsiders' point of view. Apparently, one can observe a truly double identity concept: it is truly said, that Armenia is Asia in Europe and Europe in Asia. This kind of dual identity is very typical for transformational countries, especially those which identify the direction of their further development. Armenia states, that this direction leads it to EU. Considering the importance of European Neighboring Policy, EU seems not to be much against that. In that case clash of identities can be observed in Armenian society, both on the level of culture and on that of ideology, because EU and European identity as it is, is commonly misinterpreted locally. From the point of view of those, who can be determined as nationalists, EU integration is a dangerous tendency, because “we” and “they” are very different. But from the other side, such components of European culture, as respects of human rights, personal freedom, and respect to diversity are crucially important for Armenia.

In this context the study of the similarities and differences of Armenian and European identities becomes crucially important and the possible ways of finding forms of dialogues between them on the way of European integration of Armenia is a must. Armenia, a country of rich culture, has definitely something to suggest to Europe as well, exchanging the values of democracy and free society. And that mutual exchange, if comprehended and interpreted correctly, can a good reason against those, who mix integration with colonization and for those, who believe in European future of Armenia.