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Abstract

This article critically examines contemporary narratives which frame Serbian politics as a conflict between supporters of a pro-European Union (EU) policy and supporters of closer ties with Russia. Contrary to this narrative, contemporary Serbian political actors increasingly present policies and platforms oriented towards both the European Union and Russia. These developments reflect the contradictory legacies arising from the history of Serbian and Russian diplomatic relations along with the sometimes ambivalent implications of Russia's stance on the issue of Kosovo's independence, Serbian public attitudes towards Russia and recent developments in Serbian-Russian economic relations.

Given the long time frame for EU membership and the current impasse over issues like Kosovo and Serbia's potential NATO membership, Serbia's leaders currently enjoy the luxury of simultaneously deepening ties with both the EU and Russia. However, future developments regarding Serbia's EU membership and the possibility of Serbia's joining NATO will likely present Serbian political elites with mutually-exclusive choices bearing important implications for their relations with either Russia or the EU.