

## **The Dynamics of Widening on the Deepening of the European Union —The Constitutionalization of Enhanced Cooperation\***

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### **Abstract**

On the subject of enhanced cooperation within the EU, few scholars have tried to exploit its probable correlation with the eastward enlargement. A key question with regard to this correlation is how eastward enlargement contributed to the constitutionalization of enhanced cooperation. In the explanation of this correlation, the author argues that liberal intergovernmentalism (LI) prevails over those approaches that fail to take into account the factor of widening in the European integration. However, intergovernmental bargaining or institutional development does not happen in an *epistemological anarchy* as LI assumes. They take place under the normative influence of the European integration paradigm of that period. Then, based upon the LI and taking into account that normative influence, the author presents a

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'reluctant runners model' to correlate the widening and deepening trends in the EU. It is argued that this normative influence obliged those political leaders reluctant to the eastward enlargement to give a green light, which has contributed to the transformation of the integration paradigm since the mid-1990s. It was then under the influence of this new paradigm that enhanced cooperation was first legalized and later, constitutionalized. The aim of this article is not to come up with a new theory, but cast light on the normative dimension in the European Union and the probable contribution of widening to the European integration.

**Key Words:** enhanced cooperation, EU enlargements, integration theory, liberal intergovernmentalism