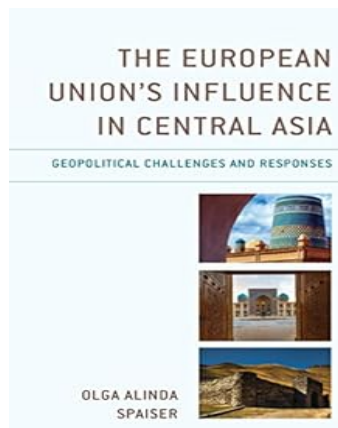


Titel:	The European Union's Influence in Central Asia
BuchID:	1637
Autor:	Olga Alinda Spaiser, Olga Alinda Spaiser
ISBN-10(13):	ASIN: B07B1LJXYL
Verlag:	Lexington Books
Seitenanzahl:	272
Sprache:	English
Bewertung:	
Bild:	



Beschreibung:

AUSGABE KINDLE

***Geopolitical Challenges and Responses
(Contemporary Central Asia: Societies, Politics, and
Cultures)***

Unknown yet highly strategic, Central Asia attracts the interest of major global powers due to its vast energy resources and crucial geographic position. Russia, China, and the European Union view this region as an indispensable springboard to enhance their political and economic influence on the Eurasian landmass. Thus, facing strong competition and working on low budget, the EU is attempting to establish itself as a relevant and influential actor in an environment in which its leadership role is far from certain. Unlike in other post-communist regions, the EU is not able to rely on the attractiveness of its political models, and risks being marginalized by other global powers. The crucial question then is: How does the EU exert influence in such a challenging geopolitical context? Which strategies does the EU apply to be an actor who counts? Through an analysis of the EU's discourse, instruments, and the reception of its policies in Central Asia, this study argues that the EU consciously takes the position of a second-tier actor who acts as a "consultant" and projects a picture of itself as an honest broker with no geopolitical agenda. The EU's influence is confined to niche domains in the security sphere that are nevertheless important for the regional

security. The EU is not a great power in the region nor is it willing to become one. It does, however, have comparative advantages in being perceived as inoffensive and for occupying areas that are neglected by the other actors, such as governance and water security.

Pressestimmen

Composed of five independent countries that emerged as a new geopolitical space after the fall of the Soviet Union, Central Asia has been studied in its various transformations. In the sphere of international politics and geopolitics, this interest in Central Asia has often been limited to the strategies of main actors--Russia, China, and to a lesser extent, the United States. However, there is another actor that has been relatively active and influential in Central Asia, with a very specific approach that has been neglected in its contribution to the transformation of Central Asia--the European Union. Olga Alinda Spaiser's book is a valuable contribution that fills the void. Thanks to this new and original study based on extensive fieldwork in Central Asia and Europe, we have an excellent analysis of the relations and interactions between the European Union and Central Asia and the region's place in global politics.--Bayram Balci, Sciences Po

Olga Alinda Spaiser has provided a valuable addition to the scarce academic literature on EU-Central Asia relations. The European Union's Influence in Central Asia offers a rich overview of Central Asia as a 'Far Neighbourhood' of Europe where relations were intensified since 2007 via an EU strategy for the region. Spaiser critically assesses the European Union as a normative actor and realistically analyzes Europe's interests in a region where Brussels is a 'second-tier' actor after Beijing and Moscow, but is valued as a partner by Central Asian regimes. This study is an important read for scholars and policymakers focusing on EU foreign and security policy, as well as Central Asia watchers.--Jos Boonstra, Centre for European Security Studies -- Dieser Text bezieht sich auf eine andere Ausgabe: hardcover.

Über den Autor und weitere Mitwirkende

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