Part I
Institutional Focus
A complaint of so-called double standards has regularly been voiced in relation to the EU’s policy on minority protection. This contribution sets out to redefine the accusation by putting it into a broader perspective pertaining to minority protection, while also touching on additional levels of (seemingly) double standards.

Talk in terms of double standards is not neutral in the sense that it refers to the use of differential standards, it always has a connotation of illegitimacy, or at least unreasonableness. Hence, the addressees of the accusation will feel the need to counter this allegation either by showing that there is actually no differential treatment or by justifying (trying to justify) a difference in treatment.

The complaint that the EU adopts double standards regarding minority protection is mostly heard and connected to different approaches externally versus internally. This differentiation became increasingly problematic when it was applied to the enlargement process, and explicit demands of minority protection were included in the accession conditions.

In this respect it is important to have a good understanding of what minority protection is all about and what standards can be considered relevant in this respect. This contribution will demonstrate that it is possible to counter the allegation of double standards (external v internal) to some extent by showing that de facto the differential treatment is less stark as it seems at first sight. A central consideration here is the importance of distinguishing between minority specific and non-minority-specific rights (policies and practices) as possible avenues of minority protection. Arguably the current focus internally seems to be on non-minority-specific policies. The actual contribution to minority protection depends then on the implementation, which needs to be ‘minority conscious’. This contribution analyses the developments in the

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