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Abstract

This introductory article deals with higher education (HE) transformations in Central and Eastern Europe in the context of democratization and globalization. The authors first briefly survey the wider canvas of reform since 1989, particularly probing the extent to which the countries of the region may be treated as a distinctive or a cohesive group. Diverging experiences with communism, international organizations and the European Union are highlighted, while attention is also focused on the differing degrees of marketization exhibited by academic systems across the region. Yet, notwithstanding such differences, it is clear that the countries of the region emerge as distinctive ?laboratories of reform?, privileged sites for understanding the interplay of external and domestic influences in the reshaping of the HE sector. Drawing on the findings of our contributors, the second part of the article then turns to understanding the domestic mediation of the processes of Europeanization and internationalization, identifying a series of key factors broadly discussed in terms of structures, norms and actors. This special issue thus aims to refine our understanding of HE transformations and internationalization in a

post-authoritarian context. It further contributes more generally to debates on Europeanization and policy transfer in the field. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)