

## Abstract

The values shared by the Member States are the basis of EU membership, which is made increasingly clear in enlargement preparations. The protection of the values in the face of democratic backsliding is therefore vital for the continuation of the EU's success. The Treaties provide a protective mechanism: a *nuclear option*, in Article 7. But is it truly that powerful? The media's depiction of the activation of Article 7 against Poland and Hungary may shed some light on the answer. Using framing theory, this paper will analyse headlines of European news publications to find out how they reported the proceedings around the article's activation. Every aspect of reporting in the news could influence the perception of the public, from the actors involved, to the relationships between them and the aspects that may have been omitted. In general, they can provide an answer as to whether Article 7 really is a *nuclear option*.

*Keywords:* Article 7, nuclear option, framing theory, EU values