

Note from the Editors

Forty-five years ago the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community was signed in Paris. Many saw it as an important contribution to peaceful relations among the European nations and some as a first step in the federation of Europe. Few if any, however, would have expected this Community to be the starting point for the emergence of a major new actor in international relations. Over the years the uncounted internal struggles over questions of competence and common positions as well as the shortcomings and clear failures in asserting a common identity on the international stage have given (and still give) sceptics inside and outside Europe all the arguments they could have wished for.

And yet today the European Union has undoubtedly become an international actor of the first order. In the framework of the European Community it negotiates and concludes agreements with third countries and groups of third countries on commercial and most other economic matters. In the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy it defines common positions on most foreign and security policy issues arising on the international agenda and has started to take common actions in many different regions and conflict zones of the world. In both frameworks, decisions are adopted on the basis of specific decision-making procedures and legal provisions which make the European Union as a foreign policy actor different not only from any nation state but also from international organizations or alliance systems.

It is true that the European Union still shows appalling weaknesses in terms of the efficiency and coherence of its external policy, and its apparent failure in former Yugoslavia has received unprecedented public attention inside and outside Europe. Yet the mere fact that today these weaknesses are now the object of a broad debate, that they are one of the major topics on the agenda of the Intergovernmental Conference and that third countries and international organizations quite obviously expect more from the European Union show that its major international role and responsibilities are now taken for granted.

For these and other reasons we feel that it is time that the European Union's foreign affairs should have a permanent forum for the analysis and discussion of central issues, questions and options. It is true that there are many distinguished journals covering international affairs and national foreign policy issues; but none of them until now has focused on the external posture of the European Union in its relations with the rest of the world.

The *European Foreign Affairs Review* will concentrate on the political, legal and economic aspects of the Union's external relations. The *Review* is

intended to function as an interdisciplinary medium for the understanding and analysis of foreign affairs issues which are of relevance to the European Union and its Member States on the one hand and its international partners on the other.

The *Review* aims to meet the needs of both the academic and the practitioner. It hopes to reach researchers of various disciplines, lawyers, government officials throughout the world dealing with EU matters, parliamentarians, EU officials, officials of international organizations, executives of multinational corporations, specialized journalists and policy-makers in general. In doing so the *Review* aims at providing a public forum for the discussion and development of European external policy interests and strategies, addressing issues from the points of view of political science and policy-making, law or economics. These issues will be discussed by authors drawn from around the world while maintaining a European focus.

With the help of the distinguished members of the *Review's* Advisory Board we intend to establish and maintain the high standard necessary in order to attain the international recognition which ultimately decides the success or failure of a venture like this. Articles will therefore be subjected to a review procedure.

Launching a new journal is always a major risk for a publisher. We are therefore very grateful to Alan Stephens, Publishing Director, of Kluwer Law International, who has supported our idea from the very beginning. We also thank Horst G. Krenzler, Director-General of DGI of the European Commission, for all the time he gave to our project in the midst of his much more practical worries about the Union's external relations.

We hope that the readers and potential authors of the *Review* will share our view that it can promote effective exchange of ideas on European foreign affairs across the boundaries of disciplines and professions and thereby make a contribution to the debate on the development of the Union's role in the world.

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