

Preface

For decades, the European integration process was focussing on economic issues, thus establishing the world's largest trading bloc. Numerous spill-over effects led to a substantial deepening of European unification in all related fields, but failed to extend to foreign, security and defence policy. Indeed, the cold war and its specific security threats gave birth to a bipolar world order with Europe gathering behind the United States of America in order to find the necessary protection. The task to extend integration to external relations could therefore only be tackled after the collapse of the Soviet system. Since then, Europe's Foreign, Security and Defence policy (CFSP/ESDP) has developed rapidly, although the necessary compromises between the 15 EU-Member States of that time were hard to find. Nevertheless, through the treaty reforms of Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice, CFSP and ESDP as new integration projects could be decided upon, thus enhancing considerably Europe's role on the international stage.

With the 2004 enlargement, new countries with new external priorities and orientations joined the EU. It is therefore necessary to analyse the changes that these priorities might introduce into CFSP and ESDP and to evaluate the overall commitment of the new Member States to the strengthening of Europe's international actorship. The question to know is to what extent and in which way the 2004 enlargement will affect the EU's recent efforts to become a strong and partly autonomous international actor.

This book tries to give some answers to this most important issue which, in fact, puts the future of Europe's foreign, security and defence policy at stake. As a lot of work has to be done in this new research field, it was in a first step necessary to gather experts from old and new Member States in order to generate and communicate the appropriate expertise. I'm therefore grateful to the European Commission for its generous financial support to the kick-off conference held on 2-3 December 2005 at the University of Würzburg/Germany and to the follow-up process which allowed to present this publication. Firstly, two contributions analyse the present state of the Union's capacities as an international power and the big Member States' influence on the shaping of that new role. Subsequently, experts from some of the new (and potentially new) Member States discuss their countries' commitment to the strengthening of Europe's foreign, security and defence policy. The volume is completed by considerations about how CFSP and ESDP could develop with or without the Constitutional Treaty, rejected by two referenda in 2005 and put on hold since then.

Herewith I want equally to say thank you to Carolin Rüger, Renate Wunram and Philipp Gieg for their precious help to the realisation of the project. Lastly, I wish to express the hope that this small book might contribute to deepen the knowledge not

only of CFSP and ESDP, but also of the EU's new Member States and their wishes and concerns – because mutual understanding is an indispensable prerequisite for the urgently needed further strengthening of Europe's foreign, security and defence policy.

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