

## J CER Book Reviews

# Research in the Field of EU External Energy Policy – A Review of Three Recent Contributions to the Literature

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The following three reviews consider books that are all related by their broad focus on energy security, but which focus on different aspects of this issue. The first of the trio, *Energy Security: The External Legal Relations of the European Union with Major Oil and Gas Supplying Countries* (by Sanam Salem Haghighi, 2007) examines the issue of European energy security from a specifically legal, rather than a politico-economic, perspective. Haghighi conducts an extremely interesting and thorough investigation into the potential for the European Union (EU) to provide a stable and transparent legal framework in which various actors may consistently and coherently construct relations with non-EU energy-producing and energy-transiting states. The second book, *The EU-Russian Energy Dialogue: Europe's Future Energy Security* (edited by Pami Aalto, 2008), considers the energy dialogue from a (Northern European) regional perspective, and uses a series of case studies from this region to highlight the difficulties faced in the creation of a pan-European energy policy. The third book, *Energy Dependency, Politics and Corruption in the Former Soviet Union* (by Margarita M. Balmaceda, 2008) uses Ukraine as a case study for the Former Soviet Union, and explores domestic factors which may explain Ukraine's continued energy dependency on Russia, and Ukraine's failure to construct a consistent, coherent energy policy, more than sixteen years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

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European energy policy is currently in vogue. The alluring interweave of sky-high oil prices, energy nationalism, and the geopolitical posturing of energy producers has attracted many non-energy specialists to apply their diverse expertise to this hitherto unfashionable subject. Consequently, there has been a major increase in academic output on the topic, with a multitude of articles and books recently published. However this is certainly not to say that the subject has become overworn. Indeed, given the multi-layered nature of the topic – with relevance to international relations, political science, European studies, international political economy, and post-Soviet politics – there is plenty of scope for additional material to offer complementarity rather than overlap. The books reviewed here are a case in point. Whilst all three directly relate to European energy policy, the authors have each tailored their approach to their particular specialism: European law, European Union institutions, and post-Soviet energy politics. The results are three very different books of contrasting styles and specificity, which intertwine to provide an enlightening overview of the complex tapestry of European energy policy.

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