

Book Review

Roland Dannreuther (ed.) (2004) *European Union Foreign and Security Policy*, London and New York: Routledge

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The ongoing debate over how far the EU is an international actor and how far the Union is able to shape international politics is treated in this edited volume by Roland Dannreuther from a single perspective. The volume seeks to answer the question whether the European Union has become a coherent and strategic actor in its immediate neighbourhood. Thus the volume assumes that a successful engagement of the EU with its neighbourhood is a crucial post-Cold War challenge for the foreign and security policy of the Union. The book consists of eleven case studies analysing the engagement of the EU in various neighbouring regions and focuses on the enlargement process in East-Central Europe, the EU engagement in the Balkans, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the policies towards the countries of the former Soviet Union. Other chapters deal with Turkey, the Middle East and with the transatlantic dimension of the EU's neighbourhood policies.

In the introduction, the editor Roland Dannreuther puts forward that the EU's engagement with its immediate neighbourhood is the most dynamic feature of its foreign and security policy. The necessity of engaging in the stabilisation of the former Warsaw Pact region emerged urgently after the breakdown of Soviet hegemony after 1989 and the result of this development was and remains a strategic geopolitical challenge to fill the emerged power vacuum. Dannreuther argues that the "internal logic of European integration dictates that the acquired gains should not be limited to the western part of the Eurasian landmass but should be extended beyond those borders" (p. 2). Furthermore, he argues that the future of the whole integration project is linked to the success of the EU's strategic engagement with the immediate neighbourhood. According to Dannreuther this challenge has three dimensions: EU enlargement, the CFSP and ESDP and the various security challenges stemming from Europe's periphery.

To answer the question whether the different policies and strategies towards its immediate neighbourhood reveal the EU as a coherent strategic actor, the contributors to the volume follow an empirical and policy-relevant analytical approach. However, even if the central aim of the volume is not to provide a new theoretical construct to understand these policies, the study "is bound to build upon existing theoretical and conceptual foundations and potentially to offer new insights" (p.6). Hence the volume conceptualises European foreign and security policy as broader than only CFSP, and the EU as more than an institution. This means that a European foreign policy emerges from the coordination of national policies, supranational policies and the policies based on the intergovernmental CFSP. It is recognised that these three different systems are strongly interconnected and that as well cooperation and a lack of coordination exists (which is particularly the case for EU policies towards its immediate neighbourhood since all three arenas have developed strong interests and preferences in this area).

This broader conception makes it clear that Europe's influence is greater than an analysis of only CFSP suggests and it underlines in addition the complexity of the EU's decision-making process. The volume focuses above all on the outcomes of the EU's foreign policies and not on an analysis of the policy itself. Thus, the contributors seek to evaluate the impact of EU policies towards its

immediate neighbourhood and to focus less on procedural and institutional mechanisms. Even if it is difficult to gain an overall picture of the complex mosaic of EU policies and strategies, the volume seeks to provide a holistic and coherent conceptualisation of European foreign policies towards its neighbouring regions and to assess whether the Union can be considered a strategic actor in these regions. The variant of the volume is to choose a strategic perspective and to contribute as well to the broader debates about the EU as an international actor. This approach is followed by all contributors, who try to answer the formulated research question by analysing the policies and strategies of the EU towards different neighbouring regions.

After the various analyses of the specific regions, the editor reaches the conclusion that the “seemingly irresolvable ambiguity about its external identity” is a critical weakness of the EU. However, the enlargement of the EU to 25 members has already provided a clearer strategic map of Europe. Next to that, a certain “enlargement fatigue” is recognised, while the prospect of membership is termed the “golden carrot”, which remains the EU’s strongest instrument for promoting stabilisation in its neighbourhood. However, it is put forward that the EU needs to develop as well ‘silver’ and ‘bronze’ carrots to promote stabilisation at the new periphery when a possible accession perspective is ruled out. Additionally all the contributions make clear that the bureaucratic and opaque decision-making -implementation make a coherent and strategic line of action difficult. However, the main reason for these problems is the sui generis character of the Union: the EU is no unitary actor with a central authority in the foreign and security policy-making. This leads to a general problem: EU policies are often rich in rhetoric, while they lack the appropriate resources and mechanisms to reach the formulated aims. Policies are often driven by external factors and the complex logic of internal EU decision-making, which often leads to various ad-hoc and uncoordinated policies.

Overall the volume presents a very well-founded, coherent and convincing piece of work in analysing the strategic engagement of the Union in dealing with its periphery. It gives the reader a very good overview of the different policies and approaches with which the EU got engaged in its immediate neighbourhood. Dannreuther managed convincingly to bring together the various contributions of the authors into a very consistent format. Even if there are certainly differences in quality, all the contributions provide a persuasive analysis and are very well written. It should be noted again that the whole approach of the volume is very descriptive and empirically oriented. However, it would sometimes have been more interesting were the contributors to have focussed more on theoretical issues and discussions. Whenever this is done (e.g. in the contribution of Wohlforth), the volume develops an even more convincing contribution to the analysis of the strategic engagement of the EU towards its neighbourhood. As a deeper theoretical reflection, however, is admittedly not the aim of the volume, its central strength is the very comprehensive account of the EU’s success in dealing with the challenges of the contemporary security environment in Europe’s “near abroad”.

The book is certainly very germane for a broad range of readers interested in the EU’s engagement in its neighbourhood in particular and its role as an international actor in general. Students of the EU’s foreign and security policy will certainly find the rich empirical analysis of the specific regions stimulating, while students of the specific regions will definitely value the comprehensive analysis of the EU’s engagement in their region of interest. The format and the content of the book give the reader the possibility to learn about and to judge on the EU’s engagement in its immediate neighbourhood. To my knowledge, such a detailed and comprehensive analysis of this engagement has not been offered before.

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When in 1989 the Berlin Wall began to crumble and Soviet hegemony slowly collapsed, there could hardly be any doubt in the minds of political leaders that, for the sake of its own security and prosperity, Western Europe had to assume the responsibilities of engaging decisively in the economic and political stabilisation of its newly liberated neighbours. With the spread of its unique model of economic and political governance based on democratic ideals being at the very heart of the European project, this challenge naturally represented something more fundamental and existential for Western Europe than a traditional geopolitical opportunity. In fact, for many, such as Roland Dannreuther, the extent to which the European Union (EU) has fared in spread-

ing the European ideal from its historical base in Western Europe since the end of the Cold War is a significant indicator not only of its success or failure as a strategic international actor, but also of the continuing validity of its central purpose. Consequently, its track record merits, even demands, the fullest academic attention.

With over a decade having passed since the Soviet withdrawal and the discussion over further expansion of the EU as heated as ever, time, therefore, was certainly ripe for Dannreuther's careful evaluation of what has become known as the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The main objective of his skilfully edited volume is, in his own words, to "examine the extent to which Western Europe, meaning the EU and its member states, has been able to respond as a coherent and strategic actor towards the countries in its immediate neighbourhood or periphery since the end of the Cold War". In order to do so, Dannreuther has divided the book into thirteen chapters of which ten have been contributed by an impressive array of international scholars each focusing on a different key region or issue. While Dannreuther's introduction sets the framework, the geographical focus of the following chapters by Pál Dunay (East-Central Europe), Gilles Dorransoro (Turkey), Ettore Greco (South-Eastern Europe), Andrei Zagorski (Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus), Hiski Haukkala (Scandinavia and the North), Neil MacFarlane (Caucasus and Central Asia), Fred Tanner (North Africa) and Roland Dannreuther (Middle East) succeeds in highlighting most facets of the EU's neighbourhood policies over the past decade, be it the inherent weaknesses of the Euro-Mediterranean Programme or the ongoing expansion of the EU's role in Bosnia Herzegovina. The picture is completed by William Wohlforth's neo-realist "transatlantic perspective" and John Gault's excellent chapter on Europe's energy security which re-emphasises Europe's strategic dependence on its immediate neighbourhood and underlines the critical but sometimes ignored role that private businesses must play in the development of Europe's periphery. From these diverse contributions emerges a broader and more cumulative argument in Dannreuther's conclusionary chapter which does not fail to pay due credit to the constructive efforts of the European neighbourhood to "return to the West" and the various EU and self-imposed hurdles it had to, and in many instances still has to, pass on the way.

The book's relevance is self-evident. While acknowledging that his work only covers a partial dimension of the totality of the EU's foreign and security policy, Dannreuther is right to point out that this dimension is a critical one, since the ultimate strategic purpose or vision of the European project has always been "to provide for the geopolitical stabilisation of Europe" and the spread of its ideals even beyond. Consequently, success or failure of a European neighbourhood strategy have significant implications for the identity and purpose of the EU, both internally in terms of its self-identity and its geographical expression (*le finalité géographique*) and also externally in terms of Europe's status and role in the international order.

Published in early 2004, however, the book has since been somewhat overtaken by events such as the accession of ten new member states to the Union or the presentation of a first set of draft EU Neighbourhood Action Plans. Nonetheless its breadth and variety of academic perspectives certainly offers the reader many a valuable starting point for further study and, in light of the ongoing discussions about Turkish membership, the aftermath of the "Orange Revolution" in the Ukraine and other similarly significant events around the European periphery, remains of doubtless relevance in numerous areas. Given today's ever more pressing scarcity of resources and the obvious geopolitical consequences, for example, especially Dannreuther's choice to include a chapter on energy security has proven far-sighted and allows the reader to benefit from John Gault's competent perspective on the "umbilical cord which connects Western Europe to its eastern and southern periphery".

To sum up, although one would sometimes wish for more crisp data, more controversial arguments and a more up to date coverage of events, students of European foreign policy will, without doubt, find Roland Dannreuther's book on the emergence of an EU neighbourhood strategy a rewarding and insightful starting point for further reading on this topic, not only because it covers all the essentials and ably brings together various academic perspectives, but also because it ventures beyond the by now almost traditional scepticism of literature in the field on the future applicability of the European model.

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To what extent has the EU acted as a coherent and strategic actor in its immediate neighborhood since the end of the Cold War? Dannreuther and colleagues aim at providing an empirical and policy-relevant assessment of the EU engagement in its periphery.

The volume is organized in 9 region-specific and 2 thematic chapters coherently structured according to a common template. The contributors address five key research questions and apply them to their respective geographical or thematic area of competence: a) the development of pertinent EU policies since the end of the Cold War; b) the extent the EU has increased its strategic presence and influence; c) the extent of EU autonomy compared to member states' policies; d) the extent of influence of other external actors; and finally e) the extent the EU has changed from being a developmental and economic actor (civilian power) to becoming a politico-security and strategic actor. The reader is thus brought on a journey from East and Central Europe (Dunay), to Turkey (Dunroso), the Balkans (Greco), Russia and European CIS (Zagorsky), Northern Europe (Haukkala), Caucasus and Central Asia (MacFarlane), North Africa (Tanner), Middle East (Dannreuther), and is finally reminded of two important cross-regional factors affecting the EU foreign policy, namely, energy security (Gault), and the power components of the transatlantic relationship (Wohlforth).

Without theoretical ambitions, the authors do however engage a variety of issues currently at the heart of academic debates in International Relations and European Studies, namely, the very definition of foreign policy in general and the nature of the EU as an international actor. The analytical framework of this study is centered on a broad and holistic conceptualization of foreign policy which bypasses the traditional bureaucratic internal-external dichotomy and the exclusively political dimension to encompass the general and multi-dimensional sphere of "external relations". For specialists of EU foreign and security policy the title of this volume could thus sound misleading: the authors explicitly do not delve into the complexities of the procedural and institutional mechanisms characterizing the EU pillarized policy-making, rather, they focus on the outcomes of the foreign policy process as a whole without engaging the technical debate on coherence and efficient subdivision of competencies among the different centers of power. As a matter of fact, in the narration there is no clear demarcation or background information about the sources of the various policies and programs – Commission or Council for instance. Although such an approach encourages the vision of the EU as a holistic unitary actor, it does hide important institutional elements which may better explain the inconsistency of certain EU behaviors.

Not surprisingly, Dannreuther et. al. do not challenge the now mainstream approach on EU actorness, and they re-emphasize how the fact that the EU should be considered as a sui-generis post-modern multi-dimensional entity – and not a classical nation-state actor – does influence not only the very conceptualization of EU foreign policy, but also and most importantly, the definition of the identity, purpose, and international role of the Union. Once more - as it is repeated ad nauseam in uncountable other contributions on the subject – the complexity, ambiguity, and incoherence of the EU external policies are appraised and analyzed. The self-restricted normative focus on neighborhood and the accent on strategy do however add interesting perspectives to the discussion. Assuming that the strategic ends of the EU are geopolitical stability and the fostering of liberal democracy at the regional rather than global level, the authors assess the adequacy and efficacy of the means created to uphold these aims by comprehensively reviewing the evolution and implementation of existing policies and programs. Apart for the success of the "golden carrot" of integration and EU membership in Central and Eastern Europe, the story of regional cooperation and partnership is quite a gloomy one: the initiatives are ambitious but poorly prioritized and/or overly bureaucratic and technocratic; policies are adopted in an ad hoc and disconnected fashion; conditionality does not always yield tangible results and political leverage is not inevitably linked to economic and financial strength; outcomes are not necessarily intentional but they may just reflect accidental and arbitrary circumstances. Given this predominantly negative picture, the authors indulge in a prescriptive exercise which at points undermines the empirical soundness of the book. At various stages, they recommend what the EU should do in order to address strategic ambiguities and shortcomings. At the bottom, however,

what they suggest the Union should do is exactly what the Union is currently doing: deal with different regions in a pragmatic and ad-hoc way without seeking to impose a rigid template, rely on the positive underpinnings of “Euro-globalization” but at the same time focus on common interests with the “receiving” countries, and finally consider the absence of clear interests and of a unitary policy toward a specific country or region as an indication for its capacity for instrumental rationality – that is, adaptation of limited resources to the pursuit of realistic and attainable goals, if they exist – and not as an overall failure. Although the contributors agree that the EU is not a strategic actor in the traditional sense, the conclusion suggests a preference for a flexible – and tautological - conception of strategy intended as “self-reflective and adaptable to changing reality” (28), thus attenuating the overall negative and pessimistic judgment on the performance of EU foreign policy actions in the near abroad.

Addressed to an academic audience and not updated to include the 2004 enlargement, the Constitution, the European Security Strategy or the most recent accession to membership negotiations of Turkey, the volume does offer to a non-specialist a useful, systematic, and coherently organized general overview of the EU neighborhood policies and of the “hottest” issues in current discussions on the international actorness of the EU. Empirically and theoretically, however, Dannreuther and colleagues do not add much to more specialized literature on the subject.