

Book Review

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The Delphic Oracle on Europe: Is there a Future for the European Union?

by Loukas Tsoukalis and Janis Emmanouilidis (eds)

Oxford University Press, ISBN: 9780199593842 (hb)

At a time of uncertainty in Europe, Loukas Tsoukalis and Janis Emmanouilidis have edited a book which examines developments, past and present, in the European Union, with the aim of providing insights into what is likely to happen in the future. Both the book and its title emerged from a seminar held in 2009 by the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy. The purpose of the conference was to think forward about the EU, particularly in respect of the likely consequences of the Lisbon Treaty, of European economic governance and the role that the EU should play globally.

The volume is arranged into three independent parts, each distinct from the other and focused on specific subjects. The first part, 'Institutions and Leaders', begins with a study by Jonas Béraud on the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, exploring the consequences for the decision-making process, budgetary procedures and the role of national parliaments. The author argues that the consequences of implementation are overrated, and that in spite of some institutional reform fatigue such changes, although discreet, will continue. Overall, the article provides an insightful analysis on what to expect from the implementation of the treaty. A second chapter, written by Olaf Cramme, focuses on the question of leadership in an enlarged EU, with its new political constraints, with the weakening of the European Commission and in the context of new and old member states' coalitions. By providing a useful and intuitive analysis on the supply and demand sides of political leadership, the author concludes that the European Council has more potential than the Commission as regards leadership potential, and foresees that in the enlarged EU the weight of diplomacy will be most considerable and appealing. The final chapter of this section, by Josef Borrell Fontelles, former European Parliament (EP) President, is dedicated to the role of the EP in the near future, which the author (unsurprisingly given his history) argues will sit at the core of the EU and its decisions, acknowledging and describing the EP as the institution that most benefited from the Lisbon Treaty. It is an insider's and a politician's view, which also offers a set of propositions to enhance the EP's role in the EU's institutional architecture.

The second part, 'New European Contract', is comprised of five chapters, covering the single market, social Europe and the environment. Pier Carlo Padoan writes, in a sceptical manner and adopting an integrationist view, about Europe's economy after the crisis, identifying the challenges to be addressed but also questioning whether they will be dealt with or not. The following chapter, by Dieter Helm, discusses how Europe has been living beyond its environmental resources, by tackling key issues such as sustainable growth, green investment, infrastructure and climate change and concludes that aside from the fashionable political trend to address climate change in relation to green growth and job creation, the lack of policy analysis is both remarkable and regrettable, something that the author attempts to put right with this chapter, providing a good foundation on which others can build. The focus of André Sapir's chapter is on the governance of the Euro area and its connection to the economic and financial crisis, acknowledging the need to rethink European economic governance, and to implement some form of political and fiscal union among Eurozone members. Regarding the political

economy of the single market, the policy-orientated chapter by Roger Liddle argues in favour of more government activism and an audacious approach to facilitate economic growth and to revive the Single Market by complementing liberalism with intervention. Finally, this section ends with a chapter about the future of social Europe by Philippe Herzog, who defends the need for member states to coordinate better between themselves and to adopt, at the EU level, more common policies, namely towards the creation of a real European labour market and the establishment of a New Deal, one that aggregates common policies which enhance human investment and create public goods.

Part III, 'Global Role', is dedicated to foreign policy, with three chapters questioning the EU's strategy, its *leitmotiv* and risk management. Overall, this section evinces the most sceptical approaches, but introduces interesting points of view and prospects on the subject. The section begins with a study by Jolyon Howorth about both the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the European Security and Defence Policy, where the author argues that the EU needs to find a strategic vision in a changing international system, in order to be a major player in the future and not be marginalised. Zaki Laïdi's chapter in its turn is sceptical about the EU coming to an agreement on future capabilities, on whether it will be able to develop and implement a common tactical strategy, and even further if it is capable of making joint decisions. Janis Emmanouilidis contributes the final chapter, where he points out the loss of attractiveness of the European project, which may lead to the marginalisation and global irrelevance of the EU.

The final chapter of the book is written by another of its editors, Loukas Tsoukalis, who not only claims to have consulted the Oracle of Delphi, but also that the prophetess has given him answers to the questions posed throughout the book, saying that in the next few years 'the key challenge for Europeans will be to identify and collectively defend common interests and values'. Broadly, Tsoukalis writes about the political and economic crisis that has characterised Europe at the beginning of the 21st century and the reasons behind it, and argues that the European model as we know it will need to be modified so it can maintain its key features.

Readers interested in understanding what Europe's future may look like will find this a useful, well-researched source. Its wide range, however, is both a strength and a weakness. The book is a valuable collection of compiled reflections on Europe but as such it also sometimes lacks consistency. Overall, the authors have delivered a book that examines Europe's present challenges, offering different views on the state of EU affairs and possible policy orientations, ending with some, even if cautious, optimism. As a mix of different policy trends, interpretations, and future prospects, the book provides a fresh new look on some matters and could be a useful text for all those interested in EU politics and Community developments in general and for researchers and policy makers in particular.