

Journal of Peace Studies, Vol. 10, Issue 4, October –December, 2003

The European Union in a Changing World

**Edited by
Rajendra K Jain
Radiant Publishers 2002
Price: Rs. 600
Pages: 307**

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The significance of this book under review lies in the extent of information and the levels of analysis of such variables that it offers. It is not only of use to the serious scholars of the European Union— its processes, functioning and relations, who will no doubt immensely benefit from the insights of regional cooperation; it will also be an authoritative body of knowledge for those who merely wish to know more about the European Union. More is actually what this book contains while it comprehensively examines the Union's economic and political relations with the USA, Russia and the African and Latin American nations. In the Asian context, relations with China and India are dealt with. The issues and implications of eastward enlargement, the European Union's role as a multilateral negotiator in the WTO, and the impact of euro in the world economy are also addressed. After all, at the beginning of the twenty first century, the EU is the largest economic bloc, the biggest trader and the biggest market of the developed world.

This book contains contributions by prominent academics and scholars— B. P. Abraham, U.S. Bawa, P. Bhattacharya, S. K. Bhattacharya, B. Bhattacharya, David Camroux, R.L. Chawla, Maria do Ceu Esteves, Mark C. Fischer, Rajen Harshe, R. K. Jain. Chintamani Mahapatra, C.S. Raj, Andre Sapir, and Vinod Verma and diplomat Guy Trouveroy, the Belgian Ambassador to India. The papers that they presented at an international seminar on "The European Union in a Changing World" held on 6-7 September 2001 have been put together in this book. What is quite evident is the intellectual debate that underlined the seminar.

Besides enumerating the history procedure that aided the setting up of EU, Andre Sapir has lucidly documented the last twenty years of the EU, since 1980s, its single market system, the monetary union, and enlargement while balancing economic diversity of different member nations. He also predicted the domestic challenges to the Union twenty years hence - budgeting, sustainable development, and the global challenge of the dollar.

R.K. Jain further makes an exposition the challenges of eastward enlargement and the policy of differentiation. He critically examines the European Monetary Union, the institutional reforms, the budgetary problems, the common agricultural policy, the play of migration and free

mobility of labour and the East European critique of the requirement of meeting 'high standards' for incorporation into membership. In a very short chapter Vinod Verma allays the qualms of the critics of Euro, and elucidates its success as a currency.

Ambassador Trouveroy expresses frustration at little credit that forty years of integration efforts has received. The task ahead, he emphasizes, is to convince both 'euroskeptics' and 'supranational fundamentalists' of the correctness of the EU. This, I feel, may be an arduous task, when juxtaposed with sovereign fears of 'devoured' small economies.

Beyond the economic aspects of integration, M.C. Fischer, draws attention to the common foreign and security policy that was included in the intentions of the founding fathers. Despite the historically slow development of the CFSP, he seems to believe that owing to the conditions after 9/11, after which "everything has changed", all that an EU needs is political impetus to set up a CFSP, as most of the resources required to set up are already available to the EU. His chapter provides a key to the agents, decision-making and instruments of the CFSP, while highlighting the difference between the mechanism of the CFSP and the agricultural, transport or environmental policies. The methods of implementing the CFSP were put to test after 9/11 with the "anti terrorism action plan", yet it remains the weakest link after Euro, enlargement, economic reform and even defense. My view is, foreign and security policy has a long distance to traverse before it gains any importance among European statesmen.

Dr. C.S. Raj provides an interesting look into the process of the CFSP inclusive of patterns before and after the Amsterdam treaty and the Nice summit collective action compromise.

The most interesting contribution by far is that of P. Bhattacharya, who offers a conceptual overview of the nature of regional integration till date. He gauges the impact of globalization on process of integration and the influence of unrestrained movement of transnational capital in the society in general and on women and marginalized groups in particular. The chapter also discusses American unilateralism and the role of EU in a multipolar world.

The pertinent queries about the transatlantic bond of problems between the US and the EU related to genetically modified organisms, 3G technologies and services, agricultural subsidies, 'beef and banana' issues, market access, sharing of leadership countries of concern - Libya, North Korea, Iran, terrorism and revolution in military affairs answered by Dr. C Mahapatra. Following in this trend are contributions by U.S. Bawa on Russia and its partnership and cooperation agreements, David Camroux on East Asia-Europe summit (ASEM) and Maria do Ceu Esteves on EU-Chinese history.

Dr. R. L. Chawla, while discussing the relations between the EU and the Latin American nations highlights the contrariness in the perceptions of the two. While Latin Americans are scared of the effect of the inclusion of the CEEC on its trade and FDI emanating from the EU; the European perspective holds that better economic relations between the two groups depend on policy reforms in Latin America, and not on EU's expansion. It seems the disparities in assessment between European Union and Latin America are carried forth from the historical trend of 'dependenista' theories.

With regard to Africa, Rajen Harshe mentions that the EU upper hand due to donor recipient nature of relations so far is in a bid to change. B. Bhattacharya, S.K. Bhattacharya and B.P. Abraham delve into the varied aspects of EU and India at the WTO, EU's trade with India and the relations between EU and India in terms of technology development. When read between the lines, this section provides a peek into India's future with the EU.