

ABSTRACTS

Katrin Böttger

A Blind Eye on Security Policy: EU Foreign Policy in Light of the Ukraine Crisis

When the former Ukraine President, Viktor Yanukovych, chose not to sign the Association Agreement with the European Union, peaceful protest arose in Kiev. The protest turned into a violent situation that resulted in the overthrow of the Ukrainian government. Subsequently, the annexation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia brought Eastern Ukraine to the edge of a civil war. Although a resolution for the crisis in Ukraine is not yet in sight, the role of the European Union and how successful it has been in creating a new level of integration is of particular interest. This article will begin by examining the role of the European Union as it pertains to the Vilnius summit before considering the lessons learned for EU Foreign Policy, the Eastern Partnership and relations with Russia. It will conclude by highlighting the effects of this crisis regarding EU Foreign Policy and discussing potential future developments.

Gianni Bonvicini and Ferdinando Nelli Feroci

The 2014 Italian Council Presidency: Ambitions and Priorities in a Challenging Context

In the second half of 2014, the Italian government holds the Presidency of the Council of the EU. It is facing a number of challenges at the European and national levels: the Lisbon Treaty altered the Council Presidency's responsibilities; new representatives for most high-level EU posts have to be appointed; and the new Italian government only assumed office in February 2014. The article discusses how the Italian Council Presidency can ensure continuity in this difficult transitional period and which political priorities it should address. The latter include: strengthening EU's economic governance, stimulating growth, defining long-term priorities for the European external policies, facilitating cooperation in the fields of security and defence, reforming the Union's migration policy, and increasing the overall efficiency and legitimacy of European policy-making.

Ramūnas Vilpišauskas and Bruno Vandecasteele

The Lithuanian Council Presidency of 2013: Small and Effective

The Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2013 took place in a challenging period with two main deadlines: to finish as much legislative work as possible before the European elections, and to adopt the legislation required for the next Multiannual Financial Framework. This article begins with reviewing the preparatory process and the main priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency. Subsequently, it highlights three main achievements of this Presidency: the progress in the establishment of a banking union, the conclusion of the Multiannual Financial Framework and the EU's relations with the Eastern Partnership countries. It then discusses the different roles played by Lithuania as a chair of the Council depending on national preferences, specific dossiers and stakeholders and decision-making rules. These roles include the general role of administrator, mediator in financial issues and political leader in relations with the Eastern Partnership countries. The paper concludes with several reflections on the potential long-term effects resulting from the Presidency on Lithuania's administration and the country's role in the EU.

Thomas Winzen and Frank Schimmelfennig

Treaty Development and Differentiation in European Integration

Since the 1990s, the development of the EU treaties has been accompanied by an increase in differentiated integration. Based on a new dataset pertaining to differentiation in EU primary law, we show that differentiated integration is driven mainly by autonomy and identity concerns. Differentiated integration mainly affects member states with highly exclusive national identities and the integration of core state powers. Existing opt-outs, treaty ratification by referendum and high wealth all contribute to differentiated integration.

Daniel Göler and Mathias Jopp

The European Elections 2014 and the Concept of ‘Top-Candidates’ – a Comment

Expectations were high regarding the European elections 2014: some hoped for a renewed impulse for the democratisation of the European Union, while others feared that gains for the Euro skeptic parties would allow these parties to impede the functioning of the European Parliament. Against this backdrop the election results can be considered as ambivalent. The article presents a preliminary analysis of the European elections. The authors begin by reviewing the elections’ results, before discussing the reasons for the success of the Euro skeptic parties and the role of the ‘top-candidates’. They conclude by providing several recommendations.

José Manuel Durão Barroso

On Europe. Considerations on the Present and the Future of the European Union

Considering the present and future framework of the European Union, José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, analyses the intricacies of the challenges and opportunities of the EU. The EU currently needs to redefine the power and influence required to safeguard Europe's peace and prosperity. Necessary political steps not only for improving the European integration process, but also for tackling crises and dealing with growing Euroscepticism, are delineated. Acknowledging that reform and evolution is needed, he explains why a revolution or even counter-revolution will not make way for a better future. It is fundamental to redefining the EU's vision in order to overcome three major gaps that all have to be tackled by the future Commission: a governance gap – by allowing more adaptability and flexibility of institutions; a legitimacy gap, and lastly the expectations gap of European citizens. The reform agenda can only succeed if, among other things, the ‘cognitive dissonance’ between national and European political dialectics is overcome, and Member States acknowledge ownership of regulatory initiatives. He further presents five principles as future guidelines. On the one hand, a clearer institutional delineation of the European institutions, and on the other, the development of the EMU as well as of political representation, both within and outside the EU, will provide the European policy framework with the capacities it needs.