

## EUROPE AS A GLOBAL POWER: VIEWS FROM THE OUTSIDE

For more than two decades since the end of the Cold War, debates on the future of Europe have largely been intra-European discussions on European institutions, identity, treaty revisions, Eastern enlargement, competitiveness, demography, democratic legitimacy and, finally, the recent financial and political turmoil that shook Europe's foundations. The mainstream European discussions have been deep but somewhat narrow. Whilst Europeans indulged in navel-gazing, the non-European world changed with an unprecedented speed and intensity. As a result, today's world is ever less European and Europe finds itself in a deep political and economic crisis. This does not mean that Europe is no longer a key global actor, though. The sheer size of its market, its historical legacy, its role in major international institutions and the scope of its development aid guarantee its global influence. However, the next decade will define whether, to what extent and in what way Europe can remain an influential force reaching beyond its geographical limits. The most recent EU response to the financial problems of Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Italy and Spain seems to have created an image of Europe in which it is stingy, rigid and possibly oppressive, which is hardly a model to emulate. This obviously undermines Europe's soft power and increases the transaction costs of Europe's international bargaining. Therefore, the way other major players look at Europe becomes of paramount importance. Europe constantly needs to interact with them to meet its basic international objectives.

A new definition of the role of the European Union in world affairs that would reflect such perceptions and respond to them is an obvious political demand. The authors of this special edition thus contribute to the overdue debate on this topic. The starting assumption of this special edition is the recognition that Europe, when defining its global role, depends as much on the views and strategic visions of outside powers as on its own self-image and global aspirations. This special issue therefore includes contributions on this topic from leading scholars from China, India, Brazil, Russia, Japan and Turkey. These countries were chosen in order to provide a variety of perspectives and reflect inherent European interests. Europe needs to make sure that its vast neighbourhood is relatively stable and prosperous. In this respect the positions of Russia and Turkey are particularly critical. Moreover, Europe needs to protect its social, labour, food safety and environmental standards that are being undermined by the global trade competition. China, India and Brazil are very crucial in this context. Furthermore, Europe's role in the global security governance should also be protected and this includes its relations with Japan and the other key regional players that were already mentioned.

Each author, with his or her own approaches and emphases, analyses their specific country's views of Europe and asks how these perceptions are likely to influence the country's political and economic relations with the EU. Further questions then touch upon the extent to which Europe remains a relevant factor in the country's global strategic vision. Is Europe perceived to be a normative power, a trading bloc, a super state, a cosmopolitan empire, an intergovernmental organization or an overstretched and declining institutional mess? Will Europe, in the eyes of the powers under study, have a 'problem-solving capacity' in global governance, or will it be a major problem in itself?

The stimulating expert chapters of this edition should be of interest to academics, policy-makers, diplomats and the wider public alike. We always had such a broad audience in mind when planning and producing this special issue. In fact, the volume grew out of a large international conference held in Prague in March 2012, which was organised jointly by the Institute of International Relations in Prague, the Czech Diplomatic Academy, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Office in Prague in Prague and the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR). The conference brought together not only the editors and chapter authors but also high level academic commentators and an interested audience of more than a 100 diplomats, politicians, students, professors and civil society representatives. We would like to thank once again all the participants and sponsors of that event, the editorial team of this journal, the excellent language editor, Jan Hrubín, and the anonymous reviewers of the various articles for their indispensable input. Without them we would not have been able to produce this stimulating special issue.

Guest Editors:

*Hartmut Mayer* (University of Oxford)  
and *Jan Zielonka* (University of Oxford)