

Preface

World politics has been surprised recently by two sudden developments. The first took place around the beginning of 2007, when the question of global warming rose abruptly to the top of the agenda, after having been a factor in the background. The second occurred in the autumn of 2008, when the rules for a global economy started inspiring great anxiety, after having been regarded as a source of stability. These two shifts took place independently, but their consequences will require common management.

The regulatory structure underlying the world's economic, legal, and political systems needs to be revised. This presents the EU with the greatest challenge it has ever faced. The point is that this global challenge comes on top of the problems already posed by markets, welfare states, security, energy, and movements of population. The additional challenge is furthermore of such a kind that a deeper discussion of the very structure of the Union is difficult to avoid.

The theme of this book is the lack of uniformity which has always characterised the EU. Economists, legal scholars, and political scientists have shown that markets, legal systems, and political structures within the Union are highly uneven, both in their own right and as compared with one another. Markets are more Europeanised than legal systems, and the latter in turn are more uniform than political structures. Whether this lack of uniformity is an asset or a liability should be seen as an open question. The answer is not self-evident, least of all when the agenda has broadened.

This book is the outcome of a collaboration among the Swedish University Networks for European Legal Studies, European Studies in Political Science, and European Studies in Economics and Business. Its purpose is to present current research in a style which is accessible not only to academics, but to a wider audience consisting of practitioners and the politically-interested public.

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Research at Lund University. The project was discussed with the authors in Mölle on 20 May 2008, at a meeting in connection with the annual conference of the economic network.

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Reference to Swedish Networks

The Departments of Law, Political Science, Economics and Business at the Swedish universities collaborate within three networks for European Studies. The networks arrange joint workshops and conferences at which ongoing research is presented. The purpose of the collaboration is to better utilize national resources and international connections.

Chairman of the Swedish Network for European Legal Studies is professor Lars Pehrson of the Department of Law, Stockholm University; chairman of the Swedish Network for European Studies in Political Science is professor Sverker Gustavsson of the Department of Government, Uppsala University; and chairman of the Swedish Network for European Studies in Economics and Business is professor Lars Oxelheim of the Institute of Economic Research, Lund University. Further information on the networks can be found at their home pages:

Law – <http://www.juridicum.su.se/nef>
Political Science – <http://www.snes.se>
Economics and Business – <http://www.snee.org>

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