

Preface

The year 2009 was indelibly marked by the global economic crisis. Indeed, the crisis has changed the way policymakers and citizens view both politics and the economy. Established ideas regarding the role of states and international organisations in economic affairs have been challenged. However, a new economic order has not yet arisen: we are still waiting to see how the developed Western states will capitalise on the effects of the crisis in order to avert similar phenomena in the future.

For the European Union, the task will be very complex. The euro knits national European economies tightly together, thus obliging the Union to formulate solutions that will keep all members of the Eurozone fit for growth and competitiveness. The economic crisis has exposed the difficulties attached to this venture, with many national economies facing stagnation or recession. The new European institutional framework that will be shaped by the Lisbon Treaty will definitely take into consideration the new economic landscape, both within the EU and across the international markets, in the capacity of setting priorities for its member countries and the countries that are willing to join. The global economic crisis and the long process of enlargement in previous years have, in many EU countries, given rise to second thoughts as to the identity and the borders of the Union. Although the EU cannot afford to compromise its potential for further enlargement and deeper integration, it seems natural that national governments will need to renegotiate among themselves the timetable for further bold institutional initiatives.

Urgent issues, rather than long-term strategies, dominate the political agenda these days. Climate change ranks very high on the list of priorities held by the EU and other international organisations as it affects a wide area of the international economy as well as national policymaking.

Terrorism and instability in the Middle East are as pressing as ever, while, at the same time, poverty and war force thousands of people to join the great waves of migration to the developed world, thus creating a potentially explosive social situation.

The Constantinos Karamanlis Institute for Democracy continues to address the domestic and international issues that affect growth, individual freedom and democracy. The 2010 Yearbook presents analyses of current developments, but also essays that reflect deeper long-term approaches to economic, political and social challenges. Prominent politicians, scholars and researchers provide us with insight into the past and the present, thus stimulating political thought and action for the future.

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