

ABSTRACTS

Daniel Göler

The European Union and the Libyan Crisis: The Responsibility to Protect as a Challenge for Strategic Cultures in Europe

The Libyan crisis has shown that the attitudes concerning the use of armed forces still differ significantly between EU Member States. These differences are of particular importance for the further development of international law concerning the responsibility to protect. This article draws on the strategic culture approach, which has become a key approach for analysing the ideational and normative conditions underpinning the deployment of military means. The article examines the different positions of the political elites as well as the general public in Germany, France and Great Britain during the Libya crises and investigates the implications of these differences for the Common Foreign and Security Policy.

Andreas Wimmel

German Parties in the Euro Crisis: The End of the Principle of Consensus?

The Euro crisis and the political measures to solve it have generated new cleavages towards European politics in Germany. Never before in the history of European integration have the parties in parliament been so divided regarding such an important issue. The article compares the situation interpretations, problem diagnosis and resolution strategies of the government and opposition parties in the German Bundestag from the first decisions on the rescue package for Greece up to the parliamentary voting on the extension of the EFSF bailout fund in the Bundestag on 29 September 2011. The results confirm the persistence of the pro-European basic consensus in the German party system but exemplify that the proposals on how to combat the financial crisis diverge significantly between the political camps.

Rudolf Hrbek

The European Citizens' Initiative: Potentials and Limits of a New Instrument in the EU Decision-Making System

The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI), an institutional innovation in the Treaty of Lisbon, introduces an instrument of direct democracy into EU decision-making. This article (after giving a brief overview on previous efforts to strengthen the role of citizens, describing the genesis of this treaty provision, and explaining the procedural rules for using the ECI) discusses effects which can be expected from the new instrument. Its direct effect will be rather limited; due to the highly formalised and not at all user-friendly procedural rules and to the fact that established strong organisations rather than citizens will get involved. Indirectly, however, the ECI has potential to stimulate processes of transnational communication in the EU.

Günther H. Oettinger

Europe's Challenges: Economy – Currency – Energy. First Vigoni Lecture

As a guest speaker Commissioner Oettinger held the first Vigoni Lecture in December 2011. The Lecture establishes a series of lectures in honour of the German-Italian bilateral cultural centre. Key points of his lecture covered – above economic considerations – the overall

benefit of Germany's membership in the EU and the recurring of Italy as an active member of the Union since Monti's cabinet took office. Moreover, Commissioner Oettinger discussed the need of strengthening the industrial sector in Europe as well as the ongoing sovereign debt crisis. He, finally, sketched the significance for a common European energy strategy considering security of supply, sustainability and affordability.

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