

Hocking, Brian and David Spence: *Foreign Ministries in the European Union. Integrating Diplomats.*

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We have seen a large number of studies on the various aspects of European foreign policy: some examine the dynamics of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), some look at the Member States' policies toward Europe and Third Countries, some contrast the role of Europe and European and national interests in a wider international framework. The new revised edition of *Foreign Ministries in the European Union Integrating Diplomats* (first edition published in 2002) looks at it from a quite different angle, from the point of view of national foreign ministries (FM).

The key point of departure that the authors take is the statement that FMs have played a critical role in the process of European integration, but the progress of integration has led to a growing discussion of their relevance. More explicitly, the book's center of attention is the extent to which the Member States' foreign ministries have countered the advance of European integration. It is a rather interesting standpoint as many of the EU policies are considered more supranational than intergovernmental, e.g., ag-

riculture, competition, regional development, while foreign ministries have traditionally been associated with the intergovernmental approach and play vital roles in the two intergovernmental pillars of the EU, i.e., the CFSP and Justice and Home Affairs. David Spence asserts in the second chapter that 'politicians and diplomats opted in all the intergovernmental conferences for more and more Brusselsisation, yet simultaneously for a hybrid between federalism and intergovernmentalism.' (Spence 2006: 33). He continues by writing '...national foreign ministries, embassies and diplomats are no longer (if ever they were) the sole or even the most appropriate defenders of national interests abroad.' (Spence 2006: 33).

The contributors study FMs in 13 member states and the FMs particular reactions to the challenges posed by European integration. Hocking and Spence propose that the reactions can be classified by three levels of what they call '*betweenness*': 'relating to the development of the European project itself; the responses of the state to the pressures associated with globalization and regionalization and, thirdly, the adaptive strategies

adopted by specific foreign ministries,' (Hocking and Spence 2006: 299). and the balance between the national and European environment, which has over the past twenty years shifted from national capitals to Brussels.

The book is divided into 17 chapters. The first two introduce the scope of the book and the key issues that the country-specific chapters focus on. In the introduction, Brian Hocking notes that there is little known about the FMs, which leads to the often adopted stereotypic views. It must be noted that the book's main importance lies in this aspect, in the breaking of some conventional wisdoms frequently derived from intuition and labeling rather than research. More explicitly, the book's center of attention is the extent to which the Member States' foreign ministries have countered the advance of European integration. Hocking remarks that the sub-title "Integrating Diplomats" was chosen so as to indicate that the book's aim is to examine the role of national diplomats in the EU process. In the following chapter, David Spence evaluates the general change of the role of FMs in the management of European affairs with particular emphasis on their role in the second and third pillars, the level of coordination with other ministries and the effect of CFSP. He argues that European integration creates a specific setting within which the FMs operate. The assessment of the effect of this particular setting on the particular Member States' FMs is the key objective of the subsequent chapters.

Chapters 3 to 15 examine the FMs in the individual Member States of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. In these chapters the authors are concerned with two main aims: how the FMs coordinate domestic issues at the European level and how they provide the national contribution to EU foreign policy. The individual chapters indicate that there are many factors that

cut across the purview of FMs and many that are quite different. The bureaucratic and political environments vary, as does the outcome for each FM when examined in detail. Each chapter is generally organized in the following manner: the background of the FM, its structure and organization, the European dimension and the adaptation of the FM to it and finally the influence of the CFSP. Most chapters have statistical information of the FM at the end, which is quite helpful. However, some of the data are more than ten years old and with the developments mentioned in the chapters could prove misleading.

The rather well organized structure of the chapters is quite useful as it allows for comparisons among countries. Still, some countries should deserve more. Additionally, a historical insight deeper than the last 15 years would prove helpful, e.g., France and Germany. It would also help the reader if the authors would choose to use graphs and figures to illustrate the changes, especially in organizational and structural terms. The chapter on Spain clearly indicates the advantage of such instruments. Nationals of the selected countries wrote these chapters, which is another asset of the book. Nevertheless, a more detailed comparison of the countries in the final chapters of the book would be useful. Hocking and Spence summarized rather than compared the findings of these particular chapters. They highlighted some significant political, historical, cultural and organizational factors but failed to present a deep, comparative, analytical insight. On the other hand, this was likely outside the scope of the book and it would be accommodating to see such work in the future.

The major setback of the volume is the failure to include the new Member States. The book was written in 2005; one year after the 8 countries from Central and Eastern Europe and 2 Mediterranean countries entered the EU. If Hocking and Spence considered such an expansion too extensive for the format of their revised edition, at least

one chapter examining them as a group and the change in their FMs with respect to their accession to the EU would be valuable and the revised edition would have benefited from it.

The presented book has much indisputable vigor. The chapters are very well organized, including the last chapter on the developments in the role of the Commission in European foreign policy and the possible effects of the future Constitution. It offers an insight into the generally neglected aspect of European foreign policy and offers a substantial number of propositions that should be dealt with in the future research. Finally, the book is a concise volume that opens new dimensions to the scholarly discussion on the topic. It will be interesting to see the new member states included in a successive book, which would enrich this fascinating and remarkable topic.

References

- Hocking, Brian and David Spence 'Afterward: Towards a European Diplomatic System?' In: *Foreign Ministries in the European Union. Integrating Diplomats*. Brian Hocking and David Spence (eds.). New York.
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