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Note from the Editor

Karen E. Smith, London School of Economics, Editor

This issue of *CFSP Forum* contains three articles, and one very important announcement (see page 10). The first article, by Ana Juncos and Karolina Pomorska, reports on their research into the impact of enlargement on CFSP committees. The second, by Maria Sabote, analyses the role of the EUPOL COPPS mission in the Palestinian territories. In the third, Fraser Cameron offers his views on prospects for EU-Russian relations after the installation of Dmitri Medvedev as Russian president.

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The Impact of Enlargement on CFSP Committees*

Ana E. Juncos, University of Bath, UK

and

Karolina Pomorska, University of Maastricht, The Netherlands

The 2004 and 2007 enlargements represented a significant challenge for EU governance in general, and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in particular, as unanimity remained the prevailing decision-making rule in this policy area. Prior to enlargement, some feared that the new member states would bring CFSP committees to a stalemate by adding new *domaines réservés* to the agenda and perturbing the consensus-building and 'esprit de corps' characteristics of this policy. Yet, in spite of the accession of twelve new member states and against all odds, the empirical research conducted by the authors and the formal record of CFSP decisions show that the CFSP internal effectiveness has not been hindered.¹ To answer this empirical puzzle, we argue, one needs to take formal and informal rules, as well as socialisation and learning processes, into account. Only then can we fully understand the impact of enlargement on CFSP committees and the mechanisms that have contributed to overcoming deadlock in the CFSP decision-making process.

While some attention has been paid to the impact of enlargement on policy substance,² its impact on CFSP governance remains to date

under-researched. This article aims to shed some light on the latter aspect by looking at both formal and informal rules in the second pillar. Formal rules are laid out in the EU treaties and other official documents. In this article, we focus primarily on the internal rules that guide negotiations within the Council and which are compiled in the *Council Rules of Procedures*. By informal rules, we mean the informal practices or the 'code of conduct' that have been identified in the European foreign policy literature; for example, consensus-building, coordination reflex, maintaining horizontal and vertical consistency and respecting the 'agreed language'.³ These formal and informal rules shape interactions within CFSP committees. By CFSP committees, this article refers to those intergovernmental bodies meeting in Brussels other than the ministerial or Heads of State/Government meetings. They include high-level committees at ambassadorial level such as Coreper II and the Political and Security Committee, other specialised committees like the EU Military Committee and the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management, and the CFSP working groups. These bodies are generally composed of national representatives based in the Permanent Representations in Brussels⁴ and their role is to discuss, draft and monitor the implementation of CFSP decisions. Hence, these bodies constitute the core of the CFSP policy-making process.⁵

Enlargement and challenges to CFSP governance

Prior to enlargement, the literature on this subject foresaw three main challenges to CFSP governance: (1) the potential divergences between the interests of newcomers and the old member states, (2) problems relating to time constraints during the meetings and (3) the disparities in the administrative cultures of the newcomers.⁶ The sections below address each of these problems and assess what role formal and informal rules played in overcoming the obstacles.

Divergence of interests

The most commonly discussed danger of enlargement related to the increased divergence of foreign policy interests, caused by more participants in the negotiations. It was argued that the new member states were likely to bring their own approaches to foreign policy issues and namely a stronger concern for Eastern Europe, Russia and the Western Balkans.⁷ While this did not mean an increase in the scope of the EU's

external action – most of these issues were already being discussed in CFSP committees – it was expected that new advocacy groups consisting of new member states would emerge around these issues.⁸ Even though some degree of formal policy convergence took place during the pre-accession phase, as the candidate states were obliged to adopt the so-called CFSP *acquis politique*, given the voluntary nature of this process (no legal adaptation or implementation is required in the CFSP chapter), there was a lot of uncertainty as to how the new member states would conduct themselves once inside the Union.

According to the officials we interviewed, in spite of the increase in the number of actors and the broadening of the range of interests, the consensus atmosphere is still evident in the meeting room in general terms. It therefore appears that the consensus-building rule (i.e. a tendency to search for a wide consensus among the member states) has played an important role in accommodating the new member states' interests. Levels of conflict have not grown, or at least not substantially, and the degree of effectiveness of the group, understood as the ability to reach agreements, has also remained largely the same. A readiness for compromise is required – even more than before. The growing number of informal negotiations taking place after enlargement has helped to overcome potential deadlocks.

The new member states have also gradually learned how better to present their strategies, so as not to endanger the consensus atmosphere and to avoid isolation. Radical positions are often condemned through ostracism; that is, being perceived as a radical within the group is a 'losing strategy'. This fact has become obvious to the new member state representatives in Brussels. However, it is true that in the first stages of the adaptation process, the new member states were not always aware of this consensus-building practice and on some occasions they concentrated their energies on their national positions without reflecting on the need for compromise, or without taking into account the general atmosphere within the group. While there is no doubt that the old member states are also concerned about their national interests, they often employ a more consensual strategy or try to appeal to the 'European interest'. For instance, Finland's more pragmatic approach towards Russia, engaging others in its proposals for partnerships on environment or development, has often been given as an example of a more successful approach than those of the Baltic countries or Poland. By contrast, the Polish 'veto' on the

mandate for the Commission to negotiate a new agreement with Russia in 2006, and the isolation of Poland on this issue, was given by one interviewee as an example of a 'nightmare scenario' for *any* member state.

Time constraints

The issue of time constraints was closely related to the problem of divergent interests. The assumption was that with the increased number of member states, there would be no time for all delegations to state and fully justify their positions or engage in deliberation/argumentation in order to convince their partners. While this applied mostly to formal meetings, it was assumed that time for informal consultations with other member states would also now be limited, including contacts with the officials from the Council Secretariat or the Commission. For the latter two, the challenge of coordinating twenty five, and later twenty seven, member states' positions in a reasonably short time seemed another challenging task. However, it was expected that exactly because of this, their significance in the negotiation processes would increase.

Time constraints were overcome with the help of both formal and informal rules. For example, dealing with time constraints was considered crucial to prevent deadlock in the Annex IV to the *Council Rules of Procedure* (2004). Several solutions were proposed in this document: full *tours de table* were discouraged; it was advised that items on the agenda of COREPER which were for information only, such as briefings over the meetings with third states, should be avoided; the delegations were asked to respect strict time limits. Furthermore, diplomats were asked to avoid repeating points made by other speakers and, unless indicated otherwise by the presidency, silence would be considered as agreement with a certain proposal. At the same time, the document encouraged 'like-minded' delegations to hold consultations prior to the formal meetings and then to delegate a single spokesperson to present a common line. Such informal practice of states cohering around an issue had long existed within the Council, but was in this way institutionalised in the *Council Rules of Procedure*. This example shows that the boundaries between formal and informal rules are not always clear-cut and can change over time.

Also the rule of 'coordination reflex' and 'pre-cooking' issues on the agenda prior to meetings played an important role in overcoming time constraints. Previous accounts of the CFSP have

documented a practice of information-sharing among national representatives.⁹ Yet, as some representatives have argued, enlargement has made the working environment even more complex, as more negotiations than ever before are taking place informally, outside the negotiation rooms and in different formats (via e-mail and phone, over lunch, etc.). As there is often not enough time during the formal meetings to explain the motivations behind certain positions, informal contact beforehand becomes indispensable in order to forge a compromise. Like-minded groups of states have become the perfect setting for such negotiations. Sometimes these groups prepare common amendments and discuss the strategy for the meeting, including the order of taking the floor. They operate on a very informal basis and usually participants credit each other with trust. As a consequence of the increasing informalisation of negotiations, official meetings have become the place where decisions previously agreed are formalised. Notwithstanding the benefits of informal contacts, such intensive cooperation within the like-minded groups could eventually become a threat to the overall cohesion and socialisation dynamics within the committees.

Finally, maintaining consistency is another rule that has helped to minimise time spent on negotiations during the formal meetings. With the arrival of the twelve new member states, the fear was that there would be chaos in the decision-making process, as issues previously closed could be re-opened at higher levels. In general, however, it seems that the newcomers identified this rule (the 'active observation' period helped in this regard), and that it was usually applied. However, on some occasions, respecting this practice proved to be a challenge for the new member states. Its breaching mostly resulted from the lack of efficient coordination mechanisms or insufficient knowledge on the past CFSP dossiers. This takes us to the third challenge related to enlargement.

Distinct diplomatic and administrative experiences

Enlargement also raised doubts over whether the newcomers, having distinct diplomatic and administrative experiences, would grasp and respect the informal 'rules of the game' in the Council, including the consensus-building practices, the latter being especially crucial at the lower levels of decision-making. Some of the early candidates' declarations in the field of foreign policy suggested a temptation to play the role of 'national champions'. Also, distinct

working traditions in the new member states were mentioned as a potential problem by officials whom we interviewed. The tight control exercised by the national Ministries of Foreign Affairs over the experts was seen as one of the most serious problems in this regard. For example, some new member states delegations had to 'clear' an issue with their capital after agreeing to it in Brussels, while others needed official approval first. Most of the administrative systems of the candidate states were highly centralised and the decision-path was relatively long.¹⁰ But the CFSP requires flexibility and swift reactions to real-time world developments. For the older EU states this has meant giving experts some room for manoeuvre and more responsibility vis-à-vis their capitals. This was missing in many post-communist Ministries of Foreign Affairs, giving rise to worries about the future dynamics of European foreign policy.

Finally, some also worried that different negotiation and organisational experiences of the new member states would negatively influence decision-making. The period when candidate states were active observers played an important role here. The newcomers had a chance to participate in meetings and learn some of the rules that were respected there. Some individual diplomats were already acting as agents of change towards their own ministries, in some cases suggesting necessary changes to the organisational designs, for example shortening the decision-making path or crediting experts in the committees with more trust and responsibility. Many of them also had to convince their colleagues in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs that working within the multilateral environment of the EU required an approach distinct from the traditional bilateral relations officials were used to. However, there were still complaints that delegates from some new member states often covered too many committees and as a result came unprepared and were unable to fully contribute to the meetings.

The adaptation process undergone by the representatives from the new member states arguably comes down to learning a new negotiating strategy, one that reconciles consensus and national interest. The first thing the new member states had to learn was to present their instructions in a less aggressive manner. As some diplomats noticed, there has been a change in the behaviour and language that the new representatives used in the Council, often becoming more pragmatic and ready to negotiate. New member states have learnt a less

radical, more consensual strategy, but one that turns out to be more successful. This is a result of the socialisation process that the national representatives from the new member states are subjected to in the Council. The committees also served as learning arenas for representatives of the old member states and EU officials, who could both discover how the candidates behaved, and the organisational designs of their ministries and coordination mechanisms.

Conclusions

In spite of the challenges posed by enlargement, the accession of twelve new member states does not seem to have had a negative impact on the number of decisions that are agreed within the CFSP. What has changed is the *way* in which these decisions are made. Formal rules, such as those enshrined in the *Council Rules of Procedure*, have helped in this regard by establishing restrictions to *tours de table* and intervention times as a way to speed up discussions during formal meetings. These formal rules have also institutionalised some previously informal practices such as the 'like-minded groups'. However, in general, it has been informal practices which have served as a way out of the institutional deadlock, and in particular, the practices of consensus-building and coordination reflex. The socialisation and learning processes undergone by the representatives of the new member states also appear especially important in this respect. These processes have also helped overcome some of the problems posed by the contrasting administrative cultures of the newcomers.

These positive conclusions need qualifying. First, by increasing the informality of CFSP negotiations and the role of 'like-minded' groups, and decreasing the role of formal meetings, enlargement may have contributed to an erosion of CFSP democratic legitimacy. While the 'informalisation' of CFSP can be seen as the only way in which to preserve the consensual atmosphere, the increasing secrecy might turn this policy area into an even more insulated and complex policy for the general public. Moreover, the institutionalisation of like-minded groups can also be seen as a challenge to democratic practice because of the restricted and unequal access of its membership. Second, one needs to be cautious about the alleged impact of enlargement on CFSP committee governance since other factors such as institutional reforms, external events, the development of the ESDP (and the consequent role of the Council Secretariat) and new technological advances also need to be taken into

account. The cumulative impact of all these factors on CFSP governance going forward is, however, difficult to anticipate.♦

* This is a summary of the paper 'Does Size Matter? CFSP Committees after Enlargement', presented at the 49th ISA Annual Convention in San Francisco in March 2008.

¹ See the *Liste des actes juridiques PESC 1993-2007*, available at http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/ACTES_1_URIDIQUES_PESC_2007.pdf

² Fraser Cameron and Antoniette Primatarova, 'Enlargement, CFSP and the Convention. The Role of the Accession States', *EPIN Working Paper*, No. 5, June 2003; Geoffrey Edwards, 'The New Member States and EU Foreign Policy Making', *CFSP Forum*, vol. 3, no. 6, pp. 13-16.; Antonio Missiroli, 'EU Enlargement and CFSP/ESDP', *Journal of European Integration*, vol. 25, no. 1, 2003, pp. 1-16.

³ For more on the CFSP informal practices see Ana E. Juncos and Karolina Pomorska, 'Playing the Brussels game: Strategic socialisation in the CFSP Council Working Groups', *European Integration Online Papers*, 10, 2006, available at <http://eiop.or.at/>

⁴ Having said that, the PSC can also meet in Political Directors formation and other CFSP committees and working groups can also meet in 'national capitals' formation.

⁵ The article is based on more than 30 in-depth interviews with national representatives to the Council committees and EU officials in 2005, 2006 and early 2008. Overall, the empirical research included interviews with diplomats from 20 member states.

⁶ Clive Archer, 'The European Union as an International Political Actor', in Neill Nugent (ed) *European Union Enlargement*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Antonio Missiroli, op. cit.; Richard Whitman, 'The Common Foreign and Security Policy after Enlargement', in Victoria Curzon Price, Alice Landau, and Richard Whitman (eds), *The Enlargement of the European Union*, (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 135-60.

⁷ Clive Archer, op. cit.

⁸ Richard Whitman, op. cit., p. 144.

⁹ Simon Nuttall, *European Political Cooperation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); Michael E. Smith, *Europe's Foreign and Security Policy: the Institutionalization of Cooperation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

¹⁰ For example, on Poland, see Karolina Pomorska, 'The Impact of Enlargement: Europeanisation of Polish Foreign Policy? Tracking Adaptation and Change in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2007, pp. 25-51.

EUPOL COPPS in the Palestinian Territories: A Neutral Force or a Protagonist in the Shadow?¹

Maria A. Sabiote, Researcher of the Observatory of European Foreign Policy, Institut Universitari d'Estudis Europeus, Barcelona, Spain

The European Union has been heading towards a shift in its attitude to the Middle East conflict. The Palestinian Authority has increasingly been the object of international scrutiny, as a part of a strategy whereby the political and institutional practices of the Palestinian actors have been placed in the spotlight. This reappraisal of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has coincided with the Union's appropriation of the discourse and practice of security sector reform.

The recent Palestinian Action Plan (agreed jointly by the Union and the Palestinian Authority within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy) contains a clear focus on the reform of core security actors. In the case of the police, the Action Plan calls for the fulfilment of the Palestinian Civil Police Development Programme, a document jointly produced by the Palestinian police and the European Union Co-ordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support in April 2005.² The aim was to establish a 'transparent and accountable police organisation with a clearly identified role, operating within a sound legal framework, capable of delivering an effective and robust policing service, responsive to the need of the society'. Furthermore, two years after the Palestinian Authority's inclusion in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the European Union launched two ESDP operations in the Palestinian Territories in the field of security sector reform – EUPOL COPPS and the EU Border Assistance Mission in Rafah (EUBAM) – as part of its efforts '[t]o become more involved in the process'.³ Both operations were focused on two core security actors of the security sector system, the police services and border guards.

The aim of this article is to analyse briefly and critically the ESDP police operation (EUPOL COPPS). Police reform has been increasingly adopted as a technique inside a broader strategy of state-building. However, as the result of the EU operation shows, police reform is also a political choice which might have

political consequences in the host state.

EUPOL COPPS

EUPOL COPPS was launched on 1 January 2006 with a long term perspective (three years) and with the aim of supporting the work of the European Community in Palestine, the EU Coordination Office for Palestinian Police Support. The objective was 'to contribute to the establishment of sustainable and effective policing arrangements under Palestinian ownership in accordance with the best international standards, in cooperation with the Community's institution building programmes as well as other international efforts in the wider context of Security Sector including Criminal Justice Reform'.

The number of EUPOL COPPS personnel has oscillated between 13 and 15 police advisers under the authority of Jonathan McIvor, even though the mission was originally supposed to have 33 personnel. Contributing states to date have been: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The mission was designed in phases, mainly focused on the refurbishment and equipment of the Jericho Training Center and of the Gaza Field Office as the main centres for police reform, as well as to provide support to the Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH), the previous international presence in the field of police reform. The operation has never been approved by the Israeli government, which actually has not recognised the ESDP mission as an international operation, forcing EU member states to accredit personnel individually in order to stay in Israel.

ESDP police reform: a neutral project?

The ESDP operation has been the hostage and one of the main protagonists of the latest dramatic events in the Occupied Territories. Unexpectedly, on 25 January 2006, Hamas, considered a terrorist organisation by the Union, won the Palestinian legislative elections over Al Fatah. The first move of the international community and also of the Union was to impose an embargo against the Hamas government until the organisation fulfilled three (unachievable) conditions: the recognition of the Israeli state, the rejection of violence and the acceptance of the previous agreements.

Regarding security bodies, the embargo against the Hamas government implied the cut-off of funds for the maintenance of the precarious institutional security architecture. The European Union and its member states channelled financial

aid to those security organs directly dependent on the Presidency of Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen) especially through the financial funding of the Presidential Guard and of the Preventive Security Forces.⁴ Hamas, in turn, reinforced the Popular Resistance Committee of the militia, through the creation of the Security Forces Support Unit, commanded by Abu Samhadana (the militia's leader) and which were deployed in the Gaza strip as a provisional force to impose law and order in the Territories (and subsequently banned by the Presidency).⁵

During these episodes, the EU politics of punishment against the Hamas government turned against the EUPOL COPPS operation. The international embargo and the subsequent lack of funds hindered the work of the EU mission, due to the fact that EUPOL COPPS was designed prior to the Hamas victory. This meant that the main institutional counterparts of the ESDP mission were no longer considered legitimate (though they were indeed democratic)⁶ and consequently, EUPOL COPPS was reduced to a minimum.⁷

As a measure of the importance of the security sector dispute, the following year, when negotiations in summer 2007 between Fatah and Hamas had advanced in the formation of national unitary government (as the international community had demanded), Hamas militias bombed the headquarters of the Preventive Security Forces, controlled by Fatah. This opened the door to a new phase of violence among the different armed groups (including the different security services) in the Gaza strip. Al Fatah seized the opportunity to announce the creation of a transitory government, headed by Abu Mazen and the 'technocrat' Salim Fayyad as prime minister, which was immediately backed by the European Union, abandoning its previous discourse about the need for a unitary executive. Under the transitory government, the Council announced the re-engagement of EUPOL COPPS and expansion of the operation, and it approved a new EUPOL COPPS Action Plan Outline. Months later, actually, the High Representative Javier Solana and the External Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner presented the Joint Paper 'Statebuilding for peace in the Middle East: An EU Action Strategy', which reiterated the EU's support for the transitory government and re-engagement in support for '[t]he establishment of modern and democratic police forces'. This statement is a sign of the paradoxical discourse of the Union in the domain of security sector reform: with its support to the emergency government, the EU feeds the conflict between the main representatives of the Palestinians, Al Fatah and Hamas, over security forces forgetting that '[C]OPPS [was] widely

praised as being more focused on strengthening civilian democratic control and on creating a single police force'.⁸

Consequently, the European implementation of police reform, guided by partial interests and lack of inclusiveness, put into question the Union's approach on democratic accountability over security bodies. Actually, in the EU documents on EUPOL COPPS, there is no reference at all to the fact that '[t]he Israeli military occupation of the Palestinian Territories is the most persistent force obstructing the emergence of a Palestinian civil police force'⁹ and to the fact that the Occupied Territories do not constitute a State as such. On the other hand, the boycott of the Hamas government and the support for the emergency government has brought about a deterioration of the Palestinian progress to institutional reform, '[a]n area where European government and the European Commission had begun to establish a useful and leading role'.¹⁰ However, during the whole process, the Union has continued to defend the work of the ESDP operation on an efficiency measures basis.¹¹

This European approach to the police reform and to the political situation in the Occupied Territories has led the Palestinians to '[s]ee COPPS as a programme helping to quash Hamas rather than supporting a security sector reform'.¹² In the light of the arguments mentioned above, overall this seems to be a well-grounded perception. ♦

¹ The author would like to thank Lucia Alexandra Poppartan and Raúl Hernández i Sagrera for their comments in this article. However, any mistake is the sole responsibility of the author.

² This office, based on the Palestinian Interior Ministry in Ramallah, was established in January 2005 in order to co-ordinate the support of the international community for Police Reform in the Palestinian Territories. Nicoletta Pirozzi, 'Building Security in the Palestinian Territories', *European Security Review*, no.28, February 2006, pp. 4-6.

³ Centro Toledo por la Paz, 'EU Civil Missions in the Palestinian Territories: frustrated reform and suspended security', *Informe CITPax*, no. 1, 2006, p. 15.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2006, p. 9.

⁵ International Crisis Group, 'Palestinians, Israel and the Quartet: Pulling back from the Brink', *Middle East Report*, no. 54, 2006.

⁶ It is the case of the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction, the ESDP partner in EUPOL COPPS is the Jericho Training Centre. The PECDR could not receive the necessary funds to perform its function (CITPax, 2006, pp. 20-21).

⁷ However, the Union pointed out some '[l]imited results' of the mission such as: the creation and maintenance of a communication network in Gaza for the Palestinian Security Forces, the refurbishment of the Jericho Training Centre, a course on Explosive Ordinance Disposal for Palestinian Security Forces, the project Understanding the Palestinian Security Sector and the elaboration of some studies on the Palestinian Criminal Justice system.

⁸ Richard Youngs, 'The EU and the Middle East Peace Process: Re-engagement?', *FRIDE Comment*, March 2007, p. 5.

Re-engagement?', *FRIDE Comment*, March 2007, p. 5.

⁹ Centro Toledo por la Paz, 'EU Civil Missions in the Palestinian Territories: frustrated reform and suspended security', *Informe CITPax*, no. 1, 2006, p. 24. See also Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, *Security Sector Reform in the Palestinian Territories: Challenges and Prospects*, Ramallah: DCAF, July 2005.

¹⁰ Richard Youngs, 'The EU and the Middle East Peace Process: Re-engagement?', *FRIDE Comment*, March 2007, p. 5.

¹¹ Centro Toledo por la Paz, 'EU Civil Missions in the Palestinian Territories: frustrated reform and suspended security', *Informe CITPax*, no. 1, 2006, p. 27.

¹² Richard Youngs, 'The EU and the Middle East Peace Process: Re-engagement?', *FRIDE Comment*, March 2007, p. 5.

The EU Should Welcome President Medvedev

Fraser Cameron, Director of the EU Russia Centre, Brussels, Belgium¹

7 May 2008 was a unique occasion in Russian history. Never before has a healthy leader left the Kremlin voluntarily to take up another political job. The world will now be watching for signs that Dmitri Medvedev can act independently of his mentor, Vladimir Putin. Without Mr Putin's support Mr Medvedev would never have made it to the highest office. But how will the tandem, with Putin in his new role as prime minister and head of United Russia, work together?

At present no-one can answer this question. However, a number of scenarios are being discussed in Moscow: Mr Putin as the power behind the throne; Mr Putin concentrating on domestic policies and leaving foreign policy to Mr Medvedev; Mr Putin returning to the Kremlin after four years; Mr Putin leaving to establish his own foundation (like Bill Clinton) and to enjoy the role of elder statesman. And so on.

Clearly Mr Medvedev's elevation had much to do with the fact that he was acceptable to the various Kremlin clans. In-fighting is nothing new among Russian leaders but the current lack of transparency makes it difficult to assess who is up and who is down. Some of Putin's key aides have followed him to the White house but a nucleus of experienced 'young Turks' have remained with Medvedev in the Kremlin. One theory doing the rounds in Moscow is that to escape from Putin's shadow, Medvedev might pardon Michael Khodorkovsky, the former boss of Yukos.

What kind of president will Mr Medvedev be? Most analysts agree there will be a change of style and rhetoric even if no substantive policy changes. After all it took Mr Putin two years before he was able to move his own people into positions of power. The West has been encouraged by many of Mr Medvedev's statements, including his inauguration speech, about the importance of the rule of law, the need to diversify the economy, fight corruption and reduce the role of the state. With his legal background there is reason to believe that the new president means what he says. Ultimately, however, the world will judge Mr Medvedev on his deeds and not just his words.

How should the West treat Mr Medvedev? President Bush had a twenty-minute meeting with him in Sochi last month and declared him a 'sound fella'. But then George Bush's judgment of other leaders has been found wanting. Angela Merkel, the first EU leader to visit Mr Medvedev after his election victory, was more cautious. She called for a united EU stance towards Russia.

Mr Medvedev takes office just a few weeks before the EU-Russia summit in Siberia on 26 June. At present the ball is in the EU's court as to its importance and likely success. A recent foreign ministers' meeting failed to reach agreement on opening negotiations for a new EU-Russia agreement and talks have been stalled for nearly two years because of Polish and now Lithuanian objections.

Assuming the EU does get its act together, the June summit could see the start of what are likely to be long and difficult negotiations. Although EU-Russia relations suffer from many bilateral problems, the fact is that the EU and Russia are becoming more and more inter-dependent. Put bluntly, the EU needs Russian oil and gas, while Russia needs EU help to diversify its economy. Russia loses more gas to flaring each year than France consumes. Improving energy efficiency is an obvious area where both sides should be able to work out a win-win package. EU know-how could also be useful for Russia in tackling its many social ills, from a disintegrating health service to growing regional disparities of wealth.

The EU also needs to negotiate with Russia as it is and not as it would like it to be. This does not mean that the EU should neglect issues of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, but it should hold Russia to its existing international legal obligations, especially in the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

The EU should also be more self-confident in dealing with Russia on a number of fronts. After all, its economy is ten times bigger than that of Russia. Gazprom gets 70% of its profits from sales to Europe and is thus highly dependent on the European market. There are signs that Russian oil production has now peaked. Russia wants visa free travel and access to the EU's internal market and educational and scientific programmes. The EU thus has strong bargaining cards, but these can be undermined if it fails to speak with a common voice towards Russia.

With Mr Medvedev moving into the Kremlin, now

is the time to make a special effort to advance EU-Russia relations. It is unfortunate, therefore, that negotiations on a new treaty have been stalled for many months by bilateral disputes, first from Poland and then Lithuania. Many states have bilateral problems with Russia but holding the EU to ransom is not the way to proceed. It undermines the EU's credibility to act on the international stage and could lead the larger

member states to form a *directoire* in more areas than at present. Central and east European EU member states are right to highlight the authoritarian trends in Russia but this should not lead to the isolation of Russia or the paralysis of the Union to act. ♦

¹ Part of this article appeared in *The Independent* on 7 May 2008.

Recently-published and forthcoming books and articles on European foreign policy

Please send details of new publications to k.e.smith@lse.ac.uk.

Emilian Kavalski, *Extending the European Security Community: Constructing Peace in the Balkans* (I.B. Taurus, 2008)

The GARNET research network sponsored a conference on the EU in International Affairs in Brussels, Belgium, 24-26 April 2008. Papers that were presented at the conference can be downloaded from the conference website: <http://www.ies.be/conference2008/papers/>

CFSP Forum Editorship

The July 2008 issue of *CFSP Forum* will be the last one I edit: I have been editing the *Forum* for five years, and it is time to pass on the job to someone else. If you are interested in editing the *Forum*, please send a CV and cover letter to me (k.e.smith@lse.ac.uk), by 15 June. This is a job which could be done by one person or two, so joint applications are welcome as well. Editorial competence in the English language is necessary. You will also need to be engaged in discussions on how to keep the *Forum* going after funding for the EU-CONSENT network of excellence comes to an end. A small committee of members of the FORNET and EU-CONSENT steering groups will take the decision on who to appoint. If you have questions about the job, feel free to contact me.