



Handbook on European Enlargement: A Commentary on the Enlargement Process

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When the initiative of Andrea Ott to write a Handbook on the legal aspects of the next enlargement of the European Union was first brought to my attention, I must confess my initial reluctance and even scepticism at its feasibility. Of course, I did see the great merits of the concept of such a venture. A handbook implies precision, simplicity and a great deal of mental discipline in order to cover the full breadth of the topic and thus facilitate the readers' understanding, especially by providing the necessary source material for further research. The European Union had already declared its readiness to embark upon a massive enlargement eastwards and this will be the largest ever. It is the EU's official position that enlargement, after all, is vital to achieving the ideals of prosperity, peace and security in Europe as a whole. If all goes according to plan, in 2004 the EU anticipates extending its borders to take in eight Central and East European countries as well as Cyprus and Malta. Moreover, the Union's enlargement policy reaches even further afield to include the Balkan countries. Seen in this context, the enlargement process is a complex and ever changing one and any attempt to demystify it, such as that involved in putting together a handbook on the subject, is most welcome. But the pitfalls of enlargement cannot be ignored.

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Editorial Review

Review

'While the need for simplicity and brevity, due to practical constraints on the size of the final book, proved a considerable challenge, the outcome is a book that reads well, is well structured and organised and is surprisingly easy to dip into for reference purposes. ... It works according to a simple methodology that aims to give the reader a broad, legal overview and analysis of the enlargement project.' Marc Maresceau, from the Foreword

'The Handbook on European Enlargement is undoubtedly a very impressive project and the editors should be praised for their accomplishment. The Handbook does provide a comprehensive legal account of the enlargement process and should be recommended reading for all who have the ambition to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of this process ... the great relevance of the Handbook will extend beyond May 1, 2004 when 10 of the Candidate States will have become Member States.' Sweet & Maxwell

About the Author

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Kirstyn Inglis, Senior Researcher in European Law, European Institute, University of Ghent, Belgium.

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