

In recent years, the concept of Europe as an idea rather than as a place has enjoyed increasing support throughout the broad framework of academics and practitioners working in the field of European Studies. As such, Martin Holland's *The Europa Lectures 2001-2006* is a timely and welcome addition to the current literature on European Studies as it provides a unique collection of diverse perspectives on the past, present and future of the European idea. The publication is based on a series of high profile lectures hosted by New Zealand's National Centre for Research on Europe since the turn of the new century and it would not be impertinent to suggest that read as a whole, the volume presents one of the most succinct and thought-provoking analyses for quite some time of the challenges which the new Europe faces. It is perhaps surprising but indeed heartening to see such an original and important addition to the field of European Studies literature emanating from as far away as New Zealand but this is perhaps a reflection of how others are often more interested in contemporary Europe than Europe itself.

The contribution by the current Prime Minister of New Zealand, Helen Clark is indeed noteworthy as she shies away from the normal reserved statements of a sitting politician and using her original training as a political scientist, she makes a strong case for European enlargement from an "outsider's" point of view. A similar approach is taken by the former New Zealand Foreign Minister Phil Goff in his analysis of the nascent European External Action Service and the ramifications of an E.U. constitution for New Zealand.

From the European side, Mariann Fischer Boel, the current European Commissioner for Agriculture engages in an astute and unconventional examination of the advantages and disadvantages of the Common Agriculture Policy whilst Margaret Beckett, the former British Foreign Secretary discusses the challenges of EU enlargement whilst presenting a compelling and convincing argument on the economic benefits of climate change. Meanwhile, Chris Patten, the former External Relations Commissioner concentrates on bilateral EU-NZ relations in his piece with some very interesting observations on multi-lateralism and the expansion of the E.U..

However, perhaps the most novel and innovative contribution to the volume is that of the former M.E.P. and chair of the European Parliament Budgetary Committee, Terry Wynn who gives a fascinating insight into the machinations of the European Parliament and the nuts and bolts of the financing of the EU enlargement process. Wynn's article tackles many of the key issues affecting the E.U. enlargement process in a combative manner but his calculations on the structural operations of transfers from the E.U. budget are captivating.

The shortest piece in the volume will probably be the one that attracts most attention. The contribution of the Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is as enlightening and contentious presentation on the Turkish candidacy for E.U. membership and his affirmation that "the Turkish population is predominantly Muslim, and this should be seen as an added value to the E.U.", is sure to ignite debate in the current political climate. Erdoğan writes with refreshing honesty and his argument is compelling and one wonders whether we will look back at this lecture in the future in terms of an opportunity lost or taken.

All the aforementioned lectures are presented in chronological order but they work best when read as a set as the issues they grapple with are not time specific and it is quite remarkable how Wynn's 2001 lecture seems even more relevant today. What is interesting is that all the lectures were given in New Zealand and one wonders if some of these politicians would have been as candid and honest in their views and opinions if the lectures had taken place in mainland Europe under the

watchful eyes of the European press and media. This is in many ways one of the real strengths of this volume in that one feels party to an exhibition of an increasingly rare honesty amongst European politicians regarding enlargement and the future of the E.U. with even the remarkable confession of Margaret Beckett that she was opposed to the U.K. joining the E.E.C. in 1973 and how she campaigned for a “no” vote in the 1975 referendum on continuing British membership. Such anecdotes pepper the publication and although the lectures may seem quite informal at times, they are backed up by sound academic research and the availability of research teams in lecture preparation is evident in Wynn’s complicated statistical analysis of E.U. transfers or Beckett’s in depth examination of E.U. agricultural reform and their impact on the Doha negotiations of the World Trade Organization.

These diverse lectures are somehow woven together in Martin Holland’s excellent introduction and the brief pages of this introduction provide a terse and seminal guide to any interested party of what has really happened in the E.U. since the dawn of the new millennium. Holland brings together the major developments which have marked the twenty-first century trajectory of the E.U. and interspersing these with the perspectives of the various contributors to the volume, he manages quite remarkably to catch the essence of the entire publication in the introduction and one finds oneself increasingly referring back to then introduction as one progresses through the different pieces. There is also a very useful and informative preface which charts the history of New Zealand’s National Centre for Research on Europe outlining its mission and funding strategy. This publication emanated from this body so it is obviously of interest to read of its other activities, projects and future objectives.

The only major drawback to this volume is its deliberately short nature for it leaves one with the desire to hear much more from the contributors. However, the questions it poses remain long after and although it may seem a long voyage to New Zealand to learn more about ourselves as Europeans, this book is definitely worth the trip.

Dr. Barrie Wharton,
Centre for European Studies,
University of Limerick,
Limerick,
Ireland.