Very Short Introductions online

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**Introduction**

Anthony Arnall

The Introduction outlines the questions that this VSI attempts to answer. Why does the EU arouse such strong passions? As an organization based on international treaties, why has it proved capable of having such far-reaching effects on its Member States and their citizens and on countries that lie beyond its borders? Part of the explanation lies in its law and legal system, which have proved remarkably effective in ensuring that Member States respect the commitments made when they signed those treaties. But what exactly is EU law about? And how has it become part of the legal DNA of its Member States so much more effectively than other treaty-based regimes?

**European Union Law: A Very Short Introduction**

Anthony Arnall

European Law: A Very Short Introduction considers the laws and legal system of the European Union and discusses the range of issues that the European Union has been given the power to regulate, including the free movement of goods and people. It considers why an organization based on international treaties has proved capable of having far-reaching effects on both its Member States and on countries that lie beyond its borders, and discusses the effectiveness of its law and legal system in ensuring that Member States respect the commitments they made when they signed the Treaties.

**2. The constitution: old and new**

Tony Wright

‘The Constitution: Old and New’ addresses the question of the nature of Britain's constitution. It is often said that Britain has an unwritten constitution or no proper
constitution at all. This is misleading, rather it has a constitution that is not codified or enacted into a single book or rules. It is a historical constitution as well as a political one and is made up of an accumulation of statutes, common law provisions and precedents, conventions and guidebooks. However, that is changing as a result of Britain joining the European Union, the growing demand for devolution in Scotland and Wales and the changes implemented by the Labour Government of Tony Blair.

The European Union: A Very Short Introduction
Simon Usherwood and John Pinder

The European Union (EU) is a unique political organization. Illustrating how and why it has developed from 1950 to the present day, The European Union: A Very Short Introduction covers a range of topics, including the EU’s early history, the workings of its institutions and what they do, the interplay between ‘eurosceptics’ and federalists, and the role of the EU beyond Europe in international affairs and as a peace-keeper. This new edition covers the migrant crisis, the UK’s decision to leave the EU, and how the EU continues to attract new members. It concludes by considering the future of the EU, and the choices and challenges that may lie ahead.

3. Secondary EU law
Anthony Arnulf

A novel feature of the Treaties was that they created institutions distinct from the Member States with the capacity to make law. Such law is known as the secondary law of the EU. It is subordinate to the Treaties, which belong to the primary law of the EU. ‘Secondary EU Law’ explains the principles of conferral and competence, which play an important role in preserving a balance between the powers of the EU and those of the Member States. A leading role is played in the exercise of the EU’s competences by its four main political institutions: the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, and the Commission.

8. Enforcing EU law
Anthony Arnulf
What are the CJEU’s powers? ‘Enforcing EU law’ considers three of the most important. Infringement proceedings assess claims by the Commission that Member States have failed to do what the Treaties require of them. If such a claim is successful, financial sanctions may be imposed on the State concerned. The action for annulment allows the validity of EU acts to be challenged and enables the CJEU to ensure that the other institutions act within the limits of their powers. The preliminary rulings procedure is the ‘keystone’ of the judicial system established by the Treaties and involves helping national courts to apply EU law correctly.

8. Ensuring the effectiveness of environmental law

Elizabeth Fisher

Much of the stretching of the legal imagination of environmental lawyers has been trying to make environmental law more effective. Enforcement practices have evolved, innovative regulatory strategies have been developed, and courts have been entrusted with a role in enforcement. ‘Ensuring the effectiveness of environmental law’ looks at how the success of environmental laws is assessed. For some laws, success is obvious, but for others it is less so; the effective management of environmental problems is often an ongoing process. The challenges of enforcement are also discussed, along with public engagement that can improve the effectiveness of environmental laws through vesting in the public a range of different rights to participate and enforce environmental laws.

1. What is citizenship, and why does it matter?

Richard Bellamy

The issue of citizenship is currently topical. Governments have promoted teaching it in schools and immigrants are expected to pass citizenship tests to become naturalized citizens. Citizenship is frequently touted as the solution to a country’s ills. ‘What is citizenship, and why does it matter?’ looks at the range and variety of uses of citizenship and the relationship between citizenship and political participation in a democratic society. Over time, the nature of the democratic political community and the qualities needed to be a citizen have changed. Why is citizenship important? What exactly does it mean? What challenges does the notion of citizenship face for the future?

5. Varieties

David Garland
Every developed country has a distinctive welfare state of its own. Welfare states generally rely on the same basic institutions, but these institutions can operate in different ways. Welfare state programmes are government programmes, but while public authority is necessary to establish, fund, and regulate these programmes, the nature of government involvement varies. Three worlds of welfare have been identified: social democratic; conservative; and liberal. ‘Varieties’ describes the welfare state regimes that developed in Sweden, Germany, and the USA, each of which exemplifies one of these ‘worlds’ of welfare. It goes on to consider briefly the welfare regimes beyond the ‘three worlds’ and how Britain’s welfare regime has changed over time.

4. The political dimension of globalization

Manfred B. Steger

Political globalization refers to the intensification and expansion of political interrelations across the globe. ‘The political dimension of globalization’ considers how these processes raise an important set of political issues pertaining to the principle of state sovereignty, the growing impact of intergovernmental organizations, and the future prospects for regional and global governance, global migration flows, and environmental policies affecting our planet. Contemporary globalization has led to a permeation of the traditional territorial borders of nation-states and fostered the growth of supraterritorial social spaces and institutions that, in turn, unsettle both familiar political arrangements and cultural traditions. Will the final outcome of political globalization be the emergence of a ‘cosmopolitan democracy’?

2. From Common Market to European Union

Anthony Arnall

The EEC Treaty said that the common market should be established gradually over a transitional period comprising three stages. When the transitional period expired in 1969, the common market was still far from complete. ‘From Common Market to European Union’ explains how in February 1986, the Member States signed a new treaty called the Single European Act committing them to establishing the internal market by the end of 1992. At the same time, the Member States began to explore widening the remit of the EEC to embrace additional policy areas. In 1992, the Maastricht Treaty on European Union was signed, giving birth to a new legal entity: the European Union.
2. Why corruption is a problem
Leslie Holmes

Corruption impacts upon individuals, groups, and organizations in numerous ways. ‘Why corruption is a problem’ considers the negative effects of corruption in terms of social, environmental, economic, politico-legal, security-related, and international implications, using examples from around the world. The impact of particular acts of corruption is often on several areas simultaneously. Some well-regarded analysts have argued that corruption can sometimes be beneficial, but there is widespread agreement that even if corruption may, in some specific situations, be beneficial, this is only ever short term; eventually, the costs of corruption invariably outweigh the benefits.

3. Arguing: the political conversation
Tony Wright

‘Arguing: the Political Conversation’ examines how the conduct of politics has changed since the Second World War. The traditional division between left and right in British politics had in common an affinity for the stability of executive power. Three major doctrinal waves have shaped the contours of British politics since the war. The governments of Attlee, Thatcher, and Blair have been associated with significant shifts in the way British politics has operated. However, the recent financial crash has produced further ideological disorientation in British politics. The old certainties no longer apply as new issues around identity, culture, and lifestyle impact on politics.

6. EU law in the national courts
Anthony Arnell

‘EU law in the national courts’ explains the concepts of direct effect and primacy. The Court of Justice of the European Union has ruled that EU law may confer rights on individuals that may be enforced in the national courts of the Member States. Such rights enjoy primacy over conflicting national laws regardless of the constitutional status of those laws. Moreover, national law must where possible be interpreted consistently with overlapping rules of EU law. When a Member State breaches EU law, any individual who suffers loss as a result may claim damages in the national courts. How have national courts responded to these principles?
3. Can we measure corruption?

Leslie Holmes

Has the scale of corruption been increasing over the years? Are some countries more corrupt than others? In order to answer these questions, we need to be able to measure corruption, which is a particularly difficult task because we cannot agree on what constitutes corruption and there is difficulty in obtaining information. ‘Can we measure corruption?’ describes four common methods used to measure the scale of corruption—official statistics, perceptual and attitudinal surveys, experiential surveys, and tracking surveys—along with some less common ones. All methods have something to offer, but none is without problems. In most research projects, deploying a ‘mixed methods’ approach is better.

7. What else can be done?

Leslie Holmes

The state is only one of many actors with a role to play in controlling corruption. ‘What else can be done?’ considers the options for international organizations (IOs), the business sector, and civil society, before evaluating the overall effort at combating corruption. The work of the European Union, the Council of Europe, and the World Trade Organization is discussed along with the United Nations Convention Against Corruption and anti-corruption measures of the World Bank and transnational corporations. Although corruption will never disappear, it can be reduced to manageable levels when states have a robust democracy, a strong commitment to the rule of law, high levels of trust, and a well-developed civil society.

4. Markets

Avinash Dixit

‘Markets’ focuses on the supply-and-demand nature of markets. The supply–demand mechanism produces just the quantity that contributes positive social surplus, and no more. The outcome maximizes the total social surplus; it is economically efficient. If underlying conditions of demand and supply change, market equilibrium will shift. Whether the product price and the quantity produced increase or decrease depends on the type of shift of demand and supply that has occurred. One cause of equilibrium shift is the imposition of a
tax. Cycles of booms and busts in housing and mining sectors are discussed along with price floors and ceilings.

3. Environmental policy: instrument choice
Stephen Smith

‘Environmental policy: instrument choice’ considers the policy instruments available to governments to regulate polluting emissions and environmental damage. Much environmental policy consists of legislation to prohibit environmentally damaging behaviour, or to compel actions which will improve the environment. Economists have argued that direct and inflexible regulation of this sort can be unduly costly, and that the same environmental improvement could be achieved at lower cost using more flexible, market-based forms of regulation. Incentive-based approaches using ‘market mechanisms’ — environmental taxes or emissions trading — have some significant advantages. The US Acid Rain Program, an example of an application of tradeable pollution permits, is discussed.

4. The night Stalin and Churchill divided Europe
Joseph M. Siracusa

‘The night Stalin and Churchill divided Europe’ discusses the important meeting between Josef Stalin and Winston Churchill in Moscow on 9 October 1944, when they agreed a plan for the Balkan region. The diplomatic efforts of the latter stages of World War II are described with the negotiations between the Three Powers — Stalin's Russia, Churchill's Great Britain, and Franklin D. Roosevelt's United States. FDR and Churchill understood that the needed Soviet victories would come with a price. They never contested the Soviet annexations under the Nazi–Soviet Pact. Nor did Roosevelt ever seriously challenge the personal diplomacy of Churchill and Stalin to divide Eastern Europe into spheres of influence.

7. The end of British politics?
Tony Wright

‘The end of British Politics?’ looks at the factors that have shaped the British political scene since the two main parties polled 97% of votes in 1951. A figure that fell to 65%
in 2010 when a coalition government was elected. In Scotland the Nationalists are now the governing party and preparing to hold a referendum on independence. A government system that was once simple has become more complex as the population has become more diverse, the role of the EU has had unexpected results and there is no longer a consensus and continuity amongst the electorate.