

Die Aussenbeziehungen der Europaeischen Gemeinschaft fuer Kohle und Stahl von 1952–1960: Die Anfaenge einer europaeischen Aussenpolitik? [The external relations of the European Coal and Steel Community from 1952 to 1960: The beginnings of a European foreign policy?] By *Claudia Becker-Doering*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2003. 387 pp. Notes, bibliography, tables. Paper, €68.00. ISBN: 3-515-08319-7.

Reviewed by John Gillingham

The origins of the association agreements of the European Union (EU), the subject of Claudia Becker-Doering's dissertation written while she was at Hamburg University, are relevant to issues that the EU is grappling with today. One such agreement opened the way to Turkey's proposed admission into the EU, a commitment that was opposed by majorities in most member states of the Union. Opposition to Turkish accession figured prominently in both French and Dutch rejection of the proposed European constitution.

Becker-Doering had to overcome a major obstacle in writing this book. The focus of her study, the 1954 association agreement with Britain, was an accord struck not with the EU but with its more modest predecessor, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which the EU swallowed up in 1960. Each organization had its own distinct character.

Designed in 1950 (and later directed) by Jean Monnet to administer West European heavy industry from its headquarters in Luxembourg, the ECSC was a *dirigiste* bureaucracy. The Brussels-based EU, on the other hand, which started out in 1958 as the European Economic Community (EEC) and was later rebranded, had a different configuration and another purpose. It was organized by the six ECSC member states both as a customs area and as a mechanism for promoting free trade. Unfortunately Becker-Doering does not adequately demonstrate the relevance of the British association agreement to subsequent EEC/EU developments.

The association treaty was an odd arrangement. The United Kingdom entered into it in late 1954 in order to protect its coal and steel industry and (in the aftermath of the French veto of the proposed European Defense Community) to maintain credibility with the influential faction of the U.S. State Department that was promoting European

integration. The British meant to restrict the terms of the agreement to commercial matters. They were troubled by—though they did nothing to stop—Monnet’s attempt to lard it with a teleological rhetoric, committing both parties to respect common rules, regulations, and higher purposes. The agreement had little operational importance, but it did set an important precedent. It enabled the ECSC, in no sense a sovereign nation, to gain a form of diplomatic recognition (legation status) from a major state. This was a breakthrough that could serve different purposes in the future—for instance, as the hub of a network of preferential trade agreements that could mutate into political associations.

Few could have predicted such an outcome. Neither the Treaty of Rome, which established the present EU, nor its coal-and-steel forerunner, the Treaty of Paris, provided for “association” or any other type of diplomatic affiliation with third nations. The omission was quite deliberate. No member state was then ready to relinquish authority over foreign policy.

The eight-month-long empty-chairs crisis, which broke out in 1965, underscored the point. A posturing commission president, Walter Hallstein, triggered the rift when he tried to get the red-carpet treatment while on a visit to Washington, which normally only powerful heads of state received. An outraged General De Gaulle thereupon decided to boycott the EEC. After this disruption, the member states retained tight control over their foreign policies until the 1990s.

The network of association agreements, which began forming in 1963, initially with Turkey and Greece, simply came in under the radar. Restricted at the outset to commercial matters and devoid of political content, they later grew into vehicles for eventual accession. Since she ends her account in 1960, Becker-Doering has little to say about this remarkable permutation.

Nor does she say enough about trade or other economic issues to indicate how they might have influenced eventual outcomes. However, this is only a quibble: the ECSC never amounted to much in practice, and the EEC/EU wielded little real power prior to the Single European Act of 1987. The author’s account remains strictly on the plane where Brussels, and Luxemburg, continue to operate most effectively—law, diplomacy, and bureaucratic entrepreneurship. Thus, her book should be read as a case study of that bane of EU detractors, empire-building by stealth.

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