
Part IV

The Nordic countries, their region and Europe: additional perspectives

Editor's remarks

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This part of the volume may seem at first sight to consist of chapters united only by their diversity. Its main organizing principle is, in fact, to fill gaps in the coverage of the foregoing parts. The latter have been built around functional themes, using individual Nordic countries and their experiences chiefly as illustrations. In this part, some chapters take a deeper look at particular countries in order to explain what is special about their approach to the European Security and Defence Policy and, perhaps, to defence in general. Other contributions tell the stories of those who are often left out of account in analyses of Nordic security—Iceland and the special-status territory of Åland. (Greenland and the Faroe Islands are touched on in chapter 1.) While the earlier parts of this volume deal to a great extent with aspects of state policy and the actions of bureaucratic or business elites, this part also tries to reflect the roles and attitudes of other players such as parliaments and the media—groups that are represented by authors Tarja Cronberg and Nils Morten Udgaard, respectively. In counterpoint to this 'disaggregating' approach, however, the chapter by Pernille Rieker attempts a comparative review of Nordic policies that, appropriately enough, comes back full circle to some of the issues raised in the introduction.

A special word of explanation may be needed about the chapters by Karlis Neretnieks and Elzbieta Tromer. The decision was made to focus this volume, and the conference that preceded it, on the five Nordic states in the belief that these countries' histories and political systems have led them into a distinctive, and partially parallel, set of challenges regarding the ESDP and European integration generally. The Baltic states neither caused these Nordic problems nor do they provide a model that (currently) offers any hope of solving them, nor can the Nordic countries offer the answer to the security worries that preoccupy the Baltic states themselves. Rather than leaving these judgements as mere assertions, Neretnieks' and Tromer's chapters have been included to explain in more detail what is different—and, in its way, also special—about the three Baltic states' appreciation of regional and European security. These authors, both of whom have been deeply engaged in the process of Nordic–Baltic cooperation, come to very much the same conclusions about the limited or secondary place that the ESDP itself currently holds in Baltic perceptions; as well as the limited power or wish of Nordic states to give the Baltic states what the Baltic states think they need in terms of security. This conclusion is important and sobering for anyone who dreams that a more united voice from the Nordic–Baltic region will gain greater influence in the ESDP and related European policy making. At least some of this volume's contributors still see hope of a more convergent Nordic position; but far greater changes of landscape would be needed to let this region's 'old' and 'new' Europeans speak as one.

