

Jean-Claude Píris, *The Lisbon Treaty. A Legal and Political Analysis* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010)

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Jean-Claude Píris' book focuses, as the title suggests, on a two-sided analysis (legal and political) of the Lisbon Treaty. It is an exquisite mixture of information and academic analyses of the Lisbon Treaty. Píris is deeply involved in the European Union having held positions such as Legal Counsel of the European Council. Therefore, his work is consistently imbued with technical aspects and specific details on any issue pertaining to the EU.

The book consists of eight chapters, framed by an introduction and a conclusion, the latter followed by useful appendices. The volume opens strategically with a foreword by the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel. The choice of the Chancellor and her piece were inspired as they point precisely to the improvements and the importance of the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. Such an introduction, in the form of a foreword entices the reader into looking forward to read the book and become aware of the extent to which the new Treaty has improved the European Union, as Merkel suggests in her half page statement.

In the introduction, Píris tries to define Europe from a few points of view: religiously, geographically, and historically. Apart from this, it is here where he sets his goal: to offer an overview of the Lisbon Treaty, explain its elements from a legal point of view and also place them in a historical and political context.

This is a useful handbook for those studying Community Law or the EU related topics, both professors and students. However, its high degree of technical terms and its very precise manner of analysis can deter the layman from reading it. The aspect of a University Handbook is strengthened even more by the boxes inserted in the text which the author uses to introduce extracts from documents. These are used as examples to support a statement or just to add more colour to strictly academic material. The book is rich in examples, resulting in almost all statements being supported by accurate practical evidence. It is definitely a text written for specialists in the EU affairs. Nevertheless, the work has numerous footnotes which explain in detail all aspects which might need further clarification. The conclusion is made up of a series of questions the author intends to reply to, in order to better set the scene of the Lisbon Treaty, and to attempt a series of predictions concerning its evolution. The conclusion appears to be an excellent summary both of the book itself, as well as of the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty. This part is highly clear and precise.

As far as the organization of the work is concerned, the author takes a specific topic and before analyzing it he places it in a context. For example, presenting the state of affairs as regulated in the past, then in the Constitutional Treaty, and finally in the Lisbon Treaty.

The author vividly describes the process leading the EU from the Constitutional Treaty to the Lisbon Treaty, carefully highlighting the fact that the latter is not an improved and concise version of the former, but a new document adapted to the current needs of the Union. As a matter of fact the book draws a constant comparison between the Constitutional Treaty and the Lisbon Treaty, an action which appears redundant sometimes.

What makes the book rather interactive and attractive to the reader is the fact that Piris takes highly debatable issues such as the decisions of the Constitutional Courts of Germany and the Czech Republic, for instance, and questions them. Sometimes answers are provided; sometimes questions are left unanswered, as food for thought for the reader. This tends to be a characteristic feature of the book – raising questions on the future of the European Union, based on the effects of the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, but refraining from making assumptions and predictions. These are left to the reader who is entrusted with all the elements they need to make just the right connection.

Another asset of this book is the fact that the author knows how to stress the important issues. Take for instance the manner of shared competences: Piris underlines the areas in which progress occurred and where it was stalled. From this point of view, the writing of Piris is well -balanced: he praises progress when it occurred and criticizes the failures. Although Piris is an advocate of the European project overall, he remains realistic with regards to the drawbacks of the Lisbon Treaty, which he also implacably mentions.

Moreover, the appendices are useful for those interested in analyzing precisely the modifications brought along by the Lisbon Treaty. They are organized in an index form, with the number of the article and its provisions alongside, so that those readers interested in specific matters do not have to go through the entire Treaty or look for a specific chapter of the Treaty in order to get the required information.

A shortcoming of the book is the absence of issue coverage when speaking about financial, economic, social and other internal affairs. Certain domains such as sport, culture, youth training, space, public health, or rights of intellectual property have been neglected. They have all been assembled in the last chapter and offered short presentations, barely one-page long. It was to be expected that in such a grand work some aspects would inevitably be left aside from the centre of attention, but in

the present case, a better usage of the space allotted to the topic is strongly recommended.

The book is written in a light manner, absent of a pompous style, contrary to what the reader would expect from such a work. Even if the choice of words is very technical, the book is easy to read by the persons knowledgeable on the matter, very explicit in some aspects, where needed, full of useful examples and footnotes to guide the reader to further explanations. From the point of view of the structure, the book is well organized, each chapter referring to individualized matters, accompanied by sufficient examples and explanations that rule out any possible after-reading dilemmas.

Taking everything into consideration, Piris' work is exceptional regarding the modifications introduced by the Lisbon Treaty to the European Union. It is comprehensive, has a neutral tone, the argument is well-balanced and well documented. It is a work strongly recommended to those professionals interested in any aspects related to the European Union, as well as to those interested in precise matters, looking for answers or simply an authorized opinion on the matter. Nevertheless, owing to the extent of explanatory footnotes and appendices, the book might be suitable for the layman interested in the changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, too.