



# **The European Union as a Small Power: After the Post-Cold War (Palgrave Studies in European Union Politics)**

*Asle Toje*

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# The European Union as a Small Power: After the Post-Cold War (Palgrave Studies in European Union Politics)

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The post-Cold War is drawing to a close. For the first time since 1945 Europe is about to experience the centrifugal forces of multipolarity. It does so after two decades of intense integration, giving rise to a collective presence in the shape of the European Union. Asle Toje asks the question, what place will the EU take in a multipolar global order? In examining the historical forces that converged in the post-war integration project, the efforts to construct a common foreign and security policy and experiences from the field, he argues that due to the lack of a workable decision-making mechanism the EU is destined to play the limited but at the same time distinct role of a small power.

Toje explains that only with the surge of integration in the post-Cold War era and the restraining force of sovereignty - both linked to the emergence of the European Union as a small power - has a situation been created that signals a return to balance of power politics. The selfless character of the EU foreign policy and the strength of the United States allow the EU to exercise strategic restraint and establish stable relations with emerging powers despite rapid shifts and extreme disparities in power.

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