

Paul Buteux
Centre for Defence & Security Studies
University of Manitoba

The Common Foreign & Security Policy of the European Union: The Intergovernmental Conference and its Implications for Canada.

Introduction:

The European Union may be said to have had common external policies, if not a common foreign and security policy, since its inception. The Paris Treaty that established the European Coal and Steel Community and the Rome Treaties that established the European Economic Community and EURATOM made provision for the external implications of the competencies conferred on the Communities by the treaties to be covered by common policies. These policies were to be determined by the joint policy-making procedures of the Communities and administered and implemented through the agencies of the High Authority and the Commission (after the 1965 Merger Treaty by a single, unified Commission). Indeed, even before the EEC formerly came into existence, and ten years before the establishment of a common external tariff, the six original members were negotiating from a common position in the "Kennedy Round" of GATT. To this day, it is arguable that the Union's Common Commercial Policy is the single issue area that has the greatest and most widespread impact on third parties. However, as the range and depth of the Union's common policies have increased, so have their implications for non-member states. Economic integration within the Union and the associated common policies impact to a greater or lesser degree on every trading nation in the world. The Union, along with the United States, now possesses structural power in the international economy.¹ As a result, even policies

¹By structural power is meant the capacity to determine, or at least exercise major influence, over the "rules of the game" that provide the context within which issues are dealt with. Historically, possession of this capacity is the prerogative of great powers. This is to be distinguished from relational power, which consists of the capacity to bargain for outcomes that in the absence of relational power would not be forthcoming. Relational power varies across issue-areas; Canada possesses relational power with respect to a wide range of issues. I would argue that the United States and the European Union are the key possessors of structural power with respect to the international trading system. Japan, despite its economic weight, does not shape to anything like the same extent the basic rules of the system that determine "who gets what, when and how".